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IN THE LINE OF FIRE

David Justice Rebuilding His Home
After Losing Nearly Everything

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THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

A Tales From Behind The Mask CATCHER'S Life

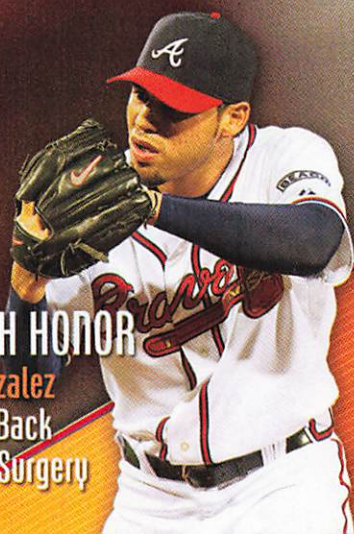


☆☆ LAST HURRAH ☆☆

Fans, Former Players Converge
For Franchise's Final Game

RETURN WITH HONOR

Mike Gonzalez
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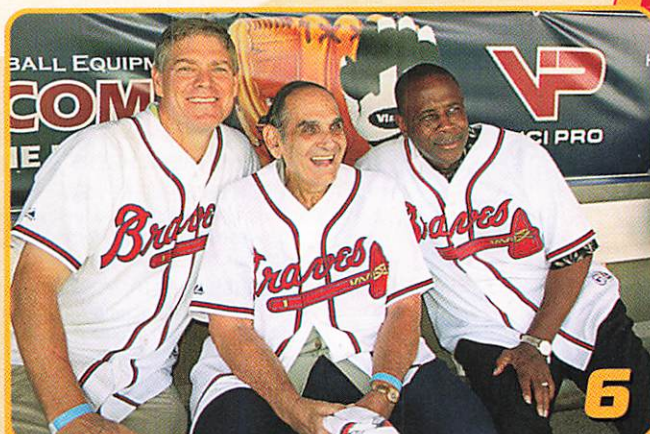
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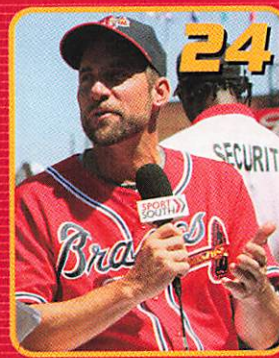
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Long-time Richmond trainer Sam Ayoub (center) shares a moment with Dale Murphy and Ralph Garr at Richmond's last game.



COVER CREDITS

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DAVID JUSTICE: Allison Shirreffs; MIKE GONZALEZ: Paul Abell/Atlanta Braves

Design by Clark Odom



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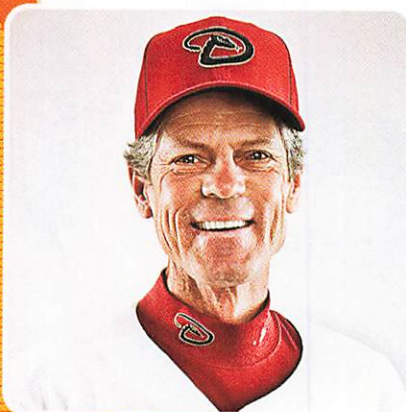
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Fans and Former Players Converge To Say: Goodbye, Richmond! Hello, Guinnetti!

RICHMOND Brewers Last Hurrah™



PATY BASHAM/SEI

Hollywood couldn't have scripted a more beautiful day or a better ending to the 43-year history of the Richmond Braves.

On Labor Day, Sept. 1, at 4:47 p.m. the final out in franchise history was made when centerfielder Carl Loadenthal caught a deep line drive hit by Luis Terrero, designated hitter for the Norfolk Tides. With that, Richmond defeated the Norfolk Tides, 9-3, and Atlanta's affiliate in the Triple-A International League was positioned to become the Gwinnett Braves next season in a new stadium located just 36 miles from Turner Field.

A sellout crowd filled The Diamond and stayed throughout the game. Each of the 11,333 fans received a commemorative t-shirt reading "The Final Game" as they entered the stadium.

Among the fans were Tom and Linda Driscoll, sitting behind the Braves dugout as they had for the past 22 seasons.

"The first year, we used tickets that belonged to Linda's company," said Tom. "After that, we bought our own tickets. We started at row 'N' and worked our way down."

The couple waved Braves tomahawks they purchased in Atlanta in the early 1990s. The choppers were so worn out that the handles had been replaced with PVC pipe and black electrical tape.

Tom was one of a handful of long-time fans invited to stand on the field during the pre-game ceremonies.



Fans contributed some of their Richmond Braves memorabilia (inset) to be included in a "time capsule."



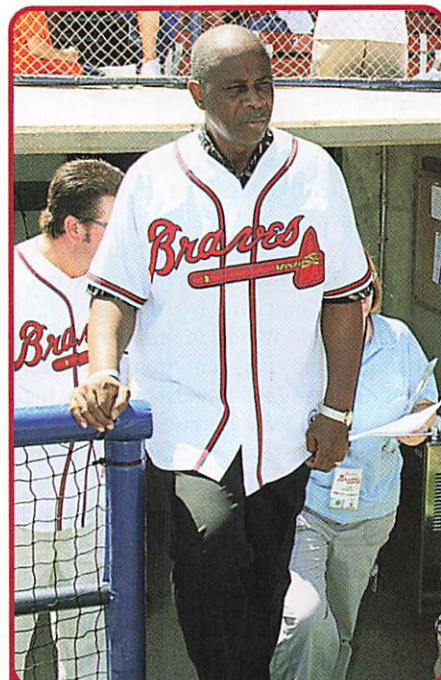
Former Richmond and Atlanta Braves (L-R) Javy Lopez, Tommy Greene (RHP, 1989-90) and Dale Murphy acknowledge cheers from the fans at the sold-out last game at The Diamond.

He took pictures of the festivities from where he stood, just past second base.

"We both love baseball, but Linda's the real die-hard Braves fan," said Tom. "I'm a fan of the game."

The Richmond Braves organization invited a number of former R-Braves to share the day with the fans. In attendance were Dale Murphy, Ralph Garr, who was also inducted into the International League Hall of Fame the night before, Javy Lopez, Tommy Greene, Shaun Fitzmaurice, Harry Saferight, Chip Childress, Johnny Grubb, David Clay, Mike Hubbard, Tommy Harrison and long-time trainer Sam Ayoub.

During the pre-game introductions, the former players donned Richmond Braves jerseys that were then signed and auctioned to benefit the Children's Hospital Foundation of Richmond. Along with other special guests, the former players watched the game from



Ralph Garr, who won International League batting titles in 1969 and '70 and the NL crown in 1974, was inducted into the IL Hall of Fame.

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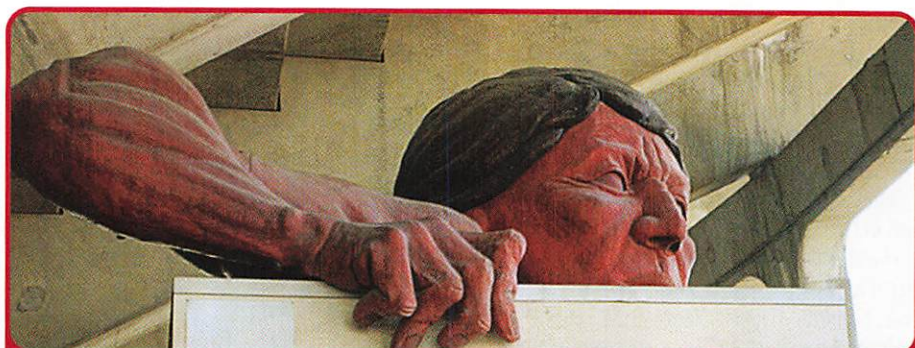
the Virginia 529 College Savings Suite.

"It's extremely emotional to be leaving Richmond," said Bruce Baldwin, general manager of the Richmond Braves for 22 years. "People still talk about the previous iteration of baseball in Richmond, the Richmond Virginians at Parker Field. We hope they'll talk about the Richmond Braves with the same passion someday."

Nostalgia was the order of the day. Murphy sat in the dugout while Ayoub showed him the photos he took on his digital camera. Players talked and reminisced about their playing days in Richmond with one another, and with the fans. Javy Lopez said his best memories were of the fans.

"The fans in Richmond were some of the most loyal," he said.

Braves Hall of Famer David Justice, who



"Connecticut" watches over the proceedings from his perch at The Diamond, but his fate had not been announced by the Richmond Metropolitan Authority.

was scheduled to appear but was kept home in San Diego by a family illness, agreed wholeheartedly in a phone interview later that evening.

"I can't tell you how much I wanted to be there at the last game," he said. "Playing in

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

IN THE LINE OF FIRE

David Justice Rebuilding His Home After Losing Nearly Everything a Year Ago

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

The wildfires that ravaged southern California last October changed the way former Braves outfielder David Justice looked at everything.

Justice, his wife, Rebecca, and sons, David Jr., called 'JR' (8), Dionisio, called 'DJ' (6), and daughter Raquel (4), live in the San Diego community of Poway. Their beautiful home and everything in it were burned to the ground due to a wildfire spread by a nasty combination of strong winds and dry conditions.

"Once you lose everything, it changes your perspective on how important 'stuff' is," said the 42-year-old Braves Hall of Famer who was scheduled to attend the last game at Richmond but had to cancel due to family illness. "The important thing was that my family was safe. They were all I cared about."

There wasn't much time to think about what to grab when the fires were bearing down on the family and it was time to evacuate. Nevertheless, Justice had the presence of mind to gather his two World Championship rings, one from the 1995 Braves, the other from the 2000 Yankees, and take them with him.

"We had to lock up the house in case of looters," said the three-time All-Star who hit the home run that won decisive Game 6 of the 1995 World Series, 1-0. "Turned out, looters weren't a problem."

In addition to baseball collectibles he accumulated through the years, Justice also lost all of his personal memorabilia.

"I hate that I lost my World Series glove," he said. "It was the same glove I'd used for the 1995 and 2000 Series."

People have since given him things, especially his old baseball cards, but Justice said he's not in a hurry to refill the shelves of the new home that is being built.

"I'm not trying to replenish things right now," he said. "Maybe in

the future, but it's just not that important to me anymore."

The family has lived in a rental house for the past year and will probably remain there for another year before the rebuilding process is complete.

"We're going to rebuild in the same place," said Justice, who hit 305 career home runs, 160 of them with the Braves from 1989-96. "We love living there. My kids have been awesome. When they heard they'd lost everything, they just said, 'This means we get all new toys, right?'"

Justice, originally from Cincinnati, was an occasional studio analyst with the Yankees YES Network for three years, traveling during the summer to work in New York. He worked 40 games in 2007 and planned to do the same this past season. That changed with the loss of his home.

"I need to be here, helping my wife with the house," he said.

Instead, Justice, who last played with Oakland in 2002, turned his hand to writing for the YES Network website and participating in online chats. He said writing a weekly column has been eye opening.

"I have a lot of respect for the guys who do the [beat writers] job," said Justice, a two-time Silver Slugger winner who also was the 1990 NL Rookie

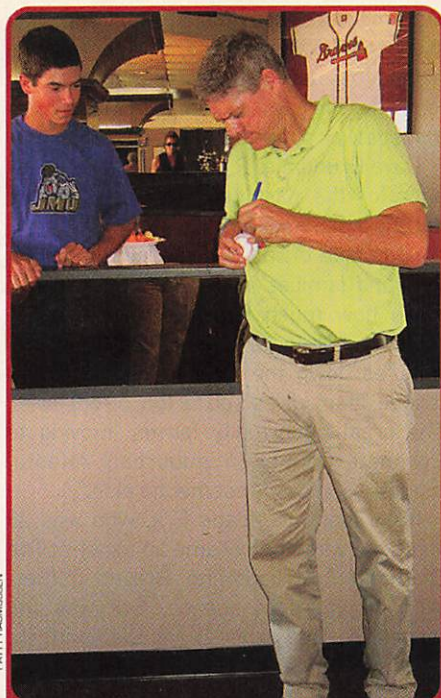
of the Year with the Braves and the 2000 ALCS MVP with the Yankees. "I've been able to see both sides of the fence now, television, writing, and playing the game. On air you have to be quick, handle questions, knowledgeable, it's not easy."

True to his straight talk reputation, Justice doesn't hold back sharing his opinions in his columns.

"I've never been one to hold back," he said. "I've always said, 'Prove me wrong if you can!'"



ALLSPORT/STEPHEN DUNN



Dale Murphy signs for a Richmond fan, proving that he does indeed write left-handed, even though he played baseball right-handed.

Richmond was so great. All of sudden, everything seemed on a bigger scale. It was like a big league atmosphere. The fans were fantastic."

And fans were asked to share some of their own memories and memorabilia by putting items in a large wooden crate labeled "Time Capsule" during the month of August. Many of the contents in the Time Capsule will be donated to the Valentine Richmond History Center for archival research and rotating exhibits. Inside the crate were seat cushions, tomahawks, notes and photos, including one of the R-Braves mascot, Diamond Duck, posing with a couple of children. The photo was inscribed, "Diamond Duck was always there and willing to spend time with the kids. Thanks for the memories. Sydney & Ryan Allen"

The enthusiastic and appreciative crowd was fully into the game from the first pitch, during wacky between-inning fan contests, through the seventh-inning stretch, and right to the final out.

Immediately afterward, players joined the current R-Braves on the field holding up a banner reading, "Thanks for the Memories...A Tribute to 43 Years in Richmond." After tipping their caps, many

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

MOVING ON

After Comeback Attempt, Javy Hoping To Help Youngsters Pursue Big League Dreams

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

Javy Lopez, the much-loved former Braves catcher, has moved on from playing baseball every day, but that doesn't mean it was easy.

"Once I made the decision to retire, it was really, really tough to watch baseball," said Lopez, 37, while attending the last game at Richmond Sept. 1.

He worked hard during the off-season with Braves bench coach Chino Cadahia, attempting to make a comeback after spending the 2007 season out of the game following his release in spring training by Colorado.

When Frank Wren offered Lopez a spot on the 2008 spring training roster, based on reports he'd gotten from Cadahia and Lopez's former teammate Eddie Perez, Lopez knew he would be battling other catchers like Brayan Pena, Corky Miller and Clint Sammons for the backup catcher's job.

In his first spring training at-bat, Lopez electrified the crowd by hitting a soaring home run.

"It was amazing," recalled Lopez, who hit .287 with 214 home runs with the Braves from 1992-2003 before departing for Baltimore via free agency after a monster final season in Atlanta (.328, 43 HR, 109 RBIs) when he won a Silver Slugger Award. "I was so pumped up. I felt that if I was producing, I could make the team. But I didn't have the spring training I expected. There was a lot of pressure on me, and the microscope was on me the whole time."

Lopez hit .182 (6-for-32) with two home runs, seven RBIs and six strikeouts in 12 spring-training games. The Braves offered him a spot at Triple-A Richmond, but as a backup to Sammons. Lopez knew he needed to play every day in order to have any real shot at a comeback. Knowing he didn't want to spend more time away from his family, he chose to retire instead, ending his playing career for good.

"For the first couple of months, it was tough," said Lopez, who was MVP of the 1996 NLCS when he batted .542 to lead the Braves' rousing comeback against St. Louis. "I kept thinking, 'What's next with my life?' I enjoyed the time with my family, but then I decided to think of what I would do next."

Lopez, a three-time NL All-Star who hit 260 career home runs including three seasons in the AL, lives in Suwanee, north of Atlanta, with Gina, his wife of four years. His sons, Javy, Jr. (12), and Kelvin (8), live with their



Catchers talk: Corky Miller (L) and Javy Lopez compare notes before the game.

mom, about 10 minutes away. Both boys are heavily involved in sports - baseball and football.

Still enormously popular, Lopez threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the Braves home opener on Mar. 31 to a huge ovation. He's made appearances at signings and other events, and is looking at developing his own baseball academy in the northern Atlanta suburbs, perhaps in conjunction with a local recreation department.

"I don't think I'll go back to professional baseball as a coach, because I like working with youth," he said. "I think it would be great to take a kid from start to finish in the process of becoming a major league player. That would be very exciting."

PLAYING FAIR

Murphy's Crusade Against Cheating Makes Major Advance at Little League Series

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

Dale Murphy is encouraged by the traction his "I Won't Cheat" Foundation has gained in the year since *ChopTalk* readers first learned about it (Oct. '07 CT).

"We talked with Steve Keener, president and chief executive officer for Little League Baseball and Softball, about a year ago," said Murphy while attending the last game at Richmond. "He liked what we were doing and thought he could help raise our profile."

To that end, all 16 teams competing in the 2008 Little League World Series wore yellow and black "I Won't Cheat!" patches on the left shoulder of their uniforms.

"I did a bunch of interviews with ESPN, and got to talk to some of the teams about why they were wearing the patch," he added. "As a result of that [exposure], we've gotten some good feedback, and we're looking for ways to continue to get our message out. We don't want to just be a slogan. We want to have more impact than that."

Murphy's foundation will make a presentation at a major ethics conference this December at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University.

"We know we have good ideas, but we want to partner with professionals in character education," said the Braves Hall of Famer and two-time National League MVP who hit 398 career home runs from 1976-93. "The patch is great, but we need to be more than a patch. We need to teach children about the long-term benefits of making good decisions, whether it relates to performance enhancing drugs or academic cheating in school."

He envisions developing a curriculum, along the lines of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) taught in schools nationwide. And Murphy, 52, also hopes to enlist help from Major League Baseball and its players.

"I've been out of the game for 15

years," he said. "We'd definitely like to find current players speaking out on this issue. We've talked to MLB about that, and we're heading down that road."

In addition to his foundation (visit iwontcheat.com for more information), Murphy has maintained a busy schedule this year traveling to the Mississippi Braves' Trustmark Park for Dale Murphy Night on Aug. 25, to



Murphy speaks at the Little League World Series, where players wore his "I Won't Cheat" patches on their uniforms.

Georgia in late May with his son, Jake (18), for a baseball event in Atlanta, and visiting his son, Shawn (24), a guard with the Miami Dolphins during an early August training camp session.

"It's a rough business," he said, chuckling, about the NFL. "It's a whole different culture from baseball. It's more like the Army!"

Listed at 6'4", 315 pounds, Shawn, 24, played for Utah State and was selected by the Dolphins in the fourth round of the 2008 college draft.

"He'll handle it," said Murphy, a seven-time All-Star who won five Gold Gloves and four Silver Sluggers. "But it's no nonsense. You can't make mistakes and expect to play in the NFL."

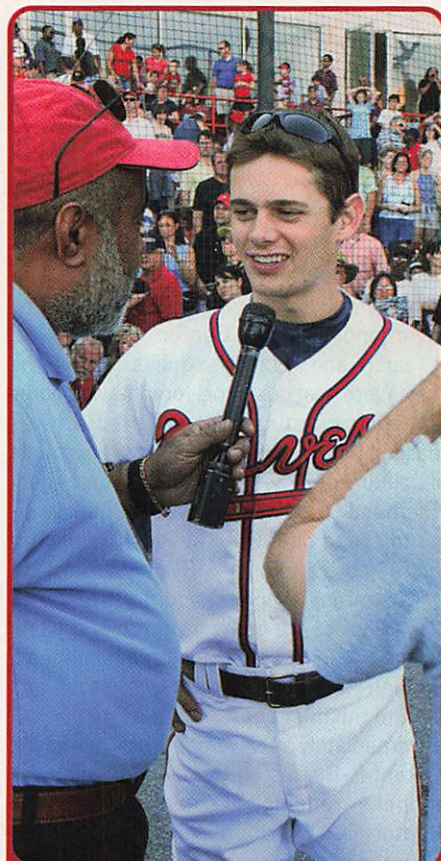
players tossed them into the stands and into the hands of lucky fans. Former players helped toss baseballs to fans that remained long after the game, listening to the stadium loudspeaker playing "Auld Lang Syne."

Dave Brundage, Richmond Braves manager for the past two seasons, said the parting was bittersweet.

"One side of me is disappointed for the kids and families in the Richmond area. I know how much baseball means in the Richmond area," he said. "But being 30 minutes down the road from your major league team gives you a ton of positives. The great opportunity for us [moving to Gwinnett County in suburban Atlanta] means it's a loss for someone else."

It's a loss for Meade Eck, who was 28 years old when he became an usher at The Diamond for Richmond Braves games. With 19 years of service, Eck was the longest-serving usher at The Diamond.

"I hate to see them leave," he said. "The other night I watched an Atlanta Braves game on television, and every player on the field had been here in Richmond. I said, 'That's my team.'"



Infielder Brent Lillibridge, who played parts of two seasons at Richmond, gives an interview about his experiences there.

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE



TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A PHENOM

IN RETROSPECT, maybe that Sports Illustrated cover wasn't such a great idea.

You remember. August 29, 2005. The cover that introduced Jeff Francoeur to the world as "The Natural," a grinning, lumber-swinging hero straight out of American legend. It was almost too good to be true, and it set some impossibly high standards for Francoeur.

"It was really cool to get on the cover," Francoeur recalled. "But at the same time, you know there are these expectations. And for whatever reason, those expectations haven't been met."

The "phenom" label in baseball isn't quite the kiss of death, but it's close. Consider some of baseball's other young, hot stars that didn't ever live up to the hype their debuts created:

- * Clint Hurdle, who famously landed on the cover of Sports Illustrated in 1978 and then didn't do much of anything as a player. (As a manager, he led the Rockies to the World Series last year.)

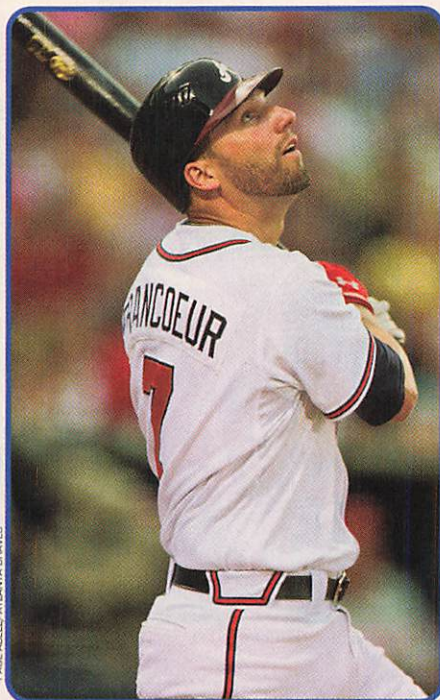
- * Brien Taylor, a lights-out pitcher in the Yankees organization who torpedoed his career when, against all Bull Durham advice, he injured his throwing hand and shoulder in a 1993 fight.

- * Todd Van Poppel, the highly heralded pitcher for the Oakland A's who never made much of an impact. Van Poppel's claim to infamy is that prior to the 1990 draft, the Braves figured he'd rather go to college than play for Atlanta. The Braves responded by drafting a guy by the name of Chipper instead.

Francoeur had already outplayed every single one of those phenoms coming into 2008. This was supposed to be the year he settled down and put it all together, the showmanship of 2005, the power of 2006, the consistent hitting of 2007, along with the ever-dominant outfield arm.

Six months later, the arm's about all that's left.

Francoeur has had, by any account, a dismal season, his batting average stuck below .235 since early July. His RBI and home run totals dipped to league-low levels for an everyday outfielder. Suddenly, the guy who'd hit some of the most memorable home runs in recent years became the guy you didn't want walking to the plate in any kind of runners-on situation.



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Matters bottomed out for Francoeur from a public-relations standpoint when he reacted angrily to the news of his June demotion, charging he was "betrayed" by the Braves. It wasn't the kind of outburst you expected from a guy who was supposed to be the next Dale Murphy.

Francoeur almost immediately regretted

Jeff Francoeur's fall from grace mirrors the struggles of three Braves icons - David Justice, Dale Murphy and John Smoltz.

careers around, some instantly, some within just a season.

So, which is the real Jeff Francoeur? The free-swinging lumberjack who'll wave a bat at a pitchout? Or the disciplined hitter who lasered in and increased his batting average 33 points from 2006 to 2007, hitting 48 homers and 208 RBIs over that same span?

Hitting coach Terry Pendleton has an easy answer: "Jeff knows what he's supposed to be doing at the plate. But the longer you do the wrong thing, the tougher it is to get back on track to do the right thing."

Francoeur remains a phenomenally popular Brave, particularly with younger fans. Even with only a handful of games remaining, even with his batting average barely clearing the Mendoza line, he's the last Brave off the field after batting practice, in constant demand for autographs and photos.

Thing is, there's no method for translating autographs signed into hits with runners in scoring position. And until there is, Francoeur knows that he's a potential liability in the Braves' lineup.

"Am I satisfied with what I did this year?" he asked rhetorically. "Of course not. I'm going to spend a lot of time [in the off-sea-



YOU NEVER WANT TO WISH A SEASON OVER, BECAUSE YOU JUST DON'T KNOW HOW MANY OF THOSE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE. BUT, MAN...



the tirade, but by then, he was en route to Mississippi. He's not the first hero to draw the ire of Braves fans. He can ask David Justice about that.

He's not the first Brave to find himself suddenly unable to do what's expected of him. Murphy was a promising young catcher who abruptly forgot how to throw to second base.

He's not the first Brave to take a huge step backward in his fourth season. John Smoltz was so bad in the first half of 1991, going 2-11, that fans screamed for him to go back to Richmond.

But all three of those players turned their

son] thinking about what I did right and what I did wrong."

He plans to revisit every phase of his game, from spikes to helmet, and start off 2009 on a good note.

"You never want to wish a season over, because you just don't know how many of those you're going to have," Francoeur continued. "But, man, with everything that's gone on this year..."

His voice trails off, but the message is clear. When we finally get through with 2008, we shall never speak of it again. And somehow, I think that would be just fine with Jeff Francoeur.

COME ON DOWN!

GEORGE POWERS has been to 41 major league stadiums and 117 minor league ballparks, but he's never had an experience quite like the one he had at The Diamond in Richmond on Aug. 31, the day before the final Braves game was played there.

It was almost like he walked onto the set of the baseball version of "The Price Is Right." In fact, the price was *free*, and Powers and his wife, Charlene, wound up going home with a veritable treasure trove of Richmond Braves giveaways from over the years.

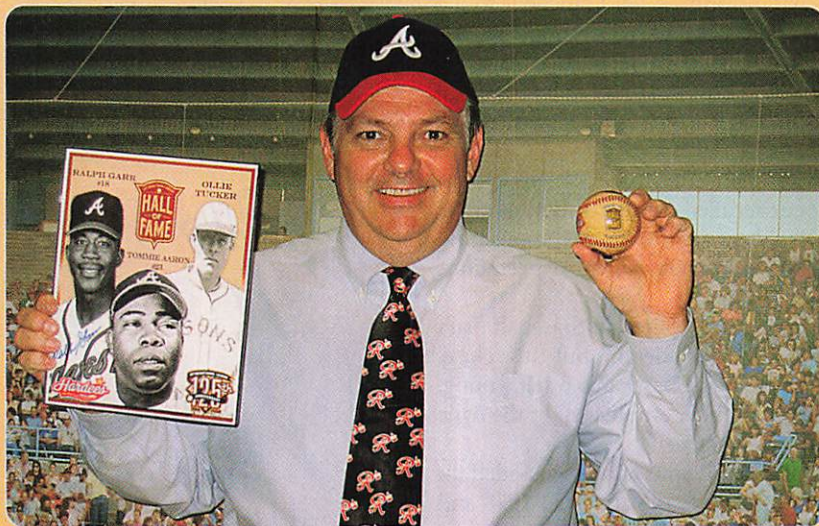
The Powers' haul included John Smoltz and Adam LaRoche bobbleheads, a backpack, t-shirts, logo baseballs, a logo clock, playing cards (each number features a player, and Phil Niekro is the King!), posters, baseball cards, pictures, yearbooks, programs, an insulated lunch box and a raincoat. Of course, they also got the commemorative program and baseball given away that day when Ralph Garr and the late Tommie Aaron were inducted into the International League Hall of Fame. Garr signed the program to top it all off!

"When we entered the stadium, the gate attendant told us to go to the pavilion area for more giveaways," said Powers, a 52-year-old regional manager in the medical sales field from Cumming, Ga. "When we got there, they were bringing out boxes of things from the storeroom, and the security guard told us to take whatever we wanted, because they were trying to get rid of 'all that junk.'"

"Well, you know what they say... One man's junk is another man's treasure!"

Powers and his wife loaded a backpack and the insulated lunch box with as much as they could hold, then he started to take it all back to their rental car.

"But as I was going to the car, I remembered, we're flying, and we'll never be able to take all of this on the plane with us," he said. "So, I went back, and we found a cardboard box and loaded it up with even more stuff! I'd have taken more, but it wouldn't fit in the box. We were able to check that box



The Richmond Braves may be history, but George Powers now has a lot of that history in his home after walking out of The Diamond with a box full of assorted R-Braves goodies on Aug. 31.



as baggage on the plane."

Powers particularly likes the 1993 team poster that features future stars Chipper Jones, Ryan Klesko, Mark Wohlers and Pedro Borbon, and the 1998 poster with Wes Helms, Randall Simon, Paul Byrd, Rudy Seanez, and "some guy named John Rocker."

Powers added, "And last but not least, there's a series of posters with former Richmond Braves from the 20th century. What a history lesson! Don Schwall, Jim Beauchamp, Darrell Evans, Tony Cloninger, Bruce Benedict, Brett Butler, Tommy Gregg, Vinny Castilla, Jermaine Dye, Greg McMichael, Mike Mordecai, Zane Smith, Tom Paciorek, Tony La Russa, Mark Lemke, and the list goes on. I have had a ball with this 'junk'!"

By the way, Powers already has a trip to New York planned next year to see the new Mets and Yankees stadiums... as well as KeySpan Park, where the Class-A Brooklyn Cyclones play. Regardless of what souvenirs he brings home, he's not likely to match his big haul from Richmond, though, and the price figures to be significantly higher.

BIG STAGE



A YEAR AGO (Oct. '07 CT), we told our readers about the exploits of Nolan Fontana, the youngest grandson of the late Lou Burdette, the greatest World Series hero in Braves history. At the time, Fontana, a shortstop and pitcher, had just batted .400 with a .667 on-base percentage in helping the USA Baseball Youth National Team win the gold medal at the International Baseball Federation (IBAF) world championships.

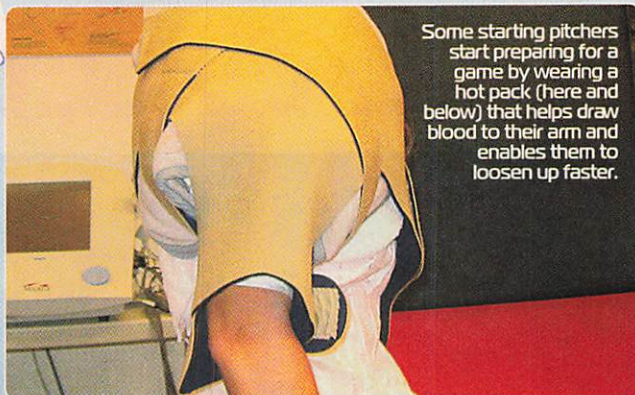
Nolan - named after Nolan Ryan - is at it again. He was a key member of the USA 18-under National Team that won a silver medal at the world championships in Edmonton, Canada, Aug. 3. Fontana started all eight games at shortstop and batted leadoff. He led the team with a .357 batting average, and posted a .526 on-base percentage with three doubles, six RBIs and nine walks.

Team USA won its first seven games before losing to Korea in the championship game. For his good work, Fontana was named to the All-Tournament Team and received the Most Runs Scored award.

A 17-year-old from Winter Garden, Fla., Fontana has verbally committed to attend the University of Florida on a baseball scholarship after graduating from West Orange High School. He also figures to attract attention in next year's draft. His grandfather, a member of the Braves Hall of Fame, was MVP of the 1957 World Series when he shut down the Yankees with three complete game victories.

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

PREP PITCHERS TO START



Some starting pitchers start preparing for a game by wearing a hot pack (here and below) that helps draw blood to their arm and enables them to loosen up faster.

SPECIAL

THROWING A BASEBALL as many as 120 times per game places enormous strain on the body. So, before a Braves starter takes the mound, he may prepare for up to two hours.

"We stretch them before and massage the muscles and make them feel as good as they possibly can before they go out there," said Jeff Porter, the Braves' head athletic trainer. "A typical thing is a hot pack and a stretch, and then a massage."

Many pitchers wear moist hot packs before their starts. About two feet long and a foot wide, these odd-looking objects cover the entire shoulder. The moisture in them draws blood to the throwing arm. Pitchers find they help them get loose faster, and just like how the hot packs feel.

Preparation takes longer for starters that need their ankles taped. Porter stressed that pitchers vary widely in how they get ready. Some may not need any treatment before a start, while others require far more attention from the trainers.

"It's everything in between. From a guy that you don't do a thing for to a guy that you spend two hours with. The spectrum is that broad," said Porter.

Some pitchers stretch out the preparation time with their own habits and rituals. They may take breaks at different stages of the process. No matter how long they spend getting ready, starters typically head to the bullpen 30 minutes before taking the mound. They may not begin throwing right away, but stretch their legs in the grass for a while.

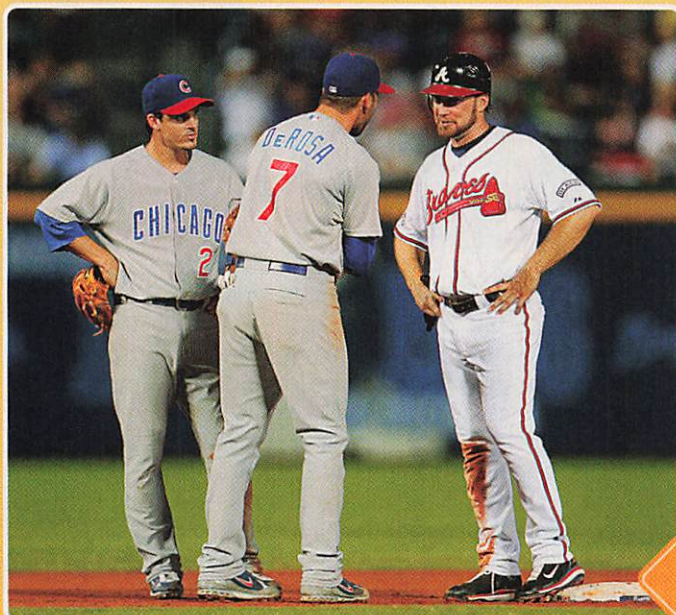
"In my opinion, they need to be out there at least 30 minutes before they start," said Porter. "You need to be in the weather and acclimated. If you're going to pitch at 96 [degrees], you don't need to be sitting in the clubhouse right before the game in 72-degree temperature in the air conditioning."

- STEVE FALL



SPECIAL

FULL CYCLE



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

IT TOOK 21 YEARS for someone to bump **Albert Hall** from being the answer to one of the most-popular Braves trivia questions. And when **Mark Kotsay** became "the last Brave to hit for the cycle," his "reward" was a ticket out of town!

On Aug. 14 in an 11-7 loss to the Cubs at Turner Field, Kotsay tripled in the second inning, hit his sixth home run of the season in the fourth, singled in the sixth and doubled in the seventh to become the first Brave to hit for the cycle since Hall did it Sept. 23, 1987, against Houston.

The only other Braves to hit for the cycle are **Dick Cooley** (1904), **Johnny Bates** (1907) and **Bill Collins** (1910). All five players to accomplish the extremely rare feat were outfielders.

On Aug. 27, just 13 days after his cycle, Kotsay was traded to the Red Sox in exchange for minor league outfielder **Luis Sumoza**, a 20-year-old with power-hitting potential. Kotsay, who hit .289 in his first year with the Braves, is eligible for free agency at the end of the season. **Josh Anderson** was called up from Richmond to replace him on the roster.

Mark Kotsay chats with the Cubs' Mark DeRosa, a former Brave, while standing at second with the double that gave him the cycle.

UNDER PARR

JAMES PARR, an unheralded Braves September callup, made quite an impression to start his big league career. The 22-year-old righthander pitched six shutout innings in each of his first two starts, becoming the first Brave to begin his career with 12 shutout innings since **Kyle Davies** in 2005. He's the first Braves pitcher since **Larry McWilliams** in 1978 to work at least six shutout innings in each of his first two starts.

Parr and three relievers shut out Washington, 2-0, on Sept. 4. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, it had been 30 years since the Braves got a shutout when their starting pitcher made his debut. McWilliams debuted in a 3-0 win against the New York Mets in July 1978.

On Sept. 10, Parr pitched six more shutout innings and left with a 4-0 lead against Colorado, only to wind up with a no decision when the bullpen imploded during a 9-5 loss.

In his first 12 innings, Parr gave up just seven hits and three walks, striking out eight. He won his last four starts at Triple-A Richmond, too.

RECLAMATION PROJECT

With the state of the injury depleted starting rotation, the Braves have already started rebuilding efforts for next year. They took a potential step in that direction in August by signing righthander **Rodrigo Lopez**, 32, a two-time 15-game winner (2002 and '05) who also has a 14-win season ('04) on his resume.

Lopez, who is 65-65 with a 4.80 ERA in seven seasons (161 starts) with San Diego, Baltimore and Colorado, is working his way back from the same elbow surgery (torn flexor tendon) that **Tom Glavine** had Aug. 21. Lopez had the procedure performed in February. The Braves signed him to a minor league contract with an option for 2009.

REINFORCEMENTS

With the roster limit expanding to 40 Sept. 1, the same day Richmond played its last game, the Braves called up five players from Richmond Sept. 2. Lefty reliever **Jeff Ridgway**, infielder **Brent Lillibridge** and catcher **Corky Miller** had been in Atlanta earlier in the season. Right-handed reliever **Jorge Julio** and right-handed starter

James Parr joined them.

In other roster moves, lefty **Francisley Bueno** was optioned to Richmond Aug. 14 when **Tom Glavine** was activated. Glavine (elbow) went back on the disabled list Aug. 15, when **Matt DeSalvo** was purchased from Richmond and **Tim Hudson** was moved to the 60-day DL.

On Aug. 19, **Jo-Jo Reyes** was recalled from Richmond, and **Ruben Gotay** was placed on the DL (hamstring). **Casey Kotchman** was placed on the bereavement list Aug. 20 to be with his ailing mother, and **Brandon Jones** was recalled from Richmond. DeSalvo was sent back to Richmond Aug. 23 when **Manny Acosta** was activated from the DL. Kotchman was moved to the restricted list Aug. 27.

Elmer Dessens was signed from the Mexican League and activated Aug. 29 to bolster the bullpen, and **Charlie Morton** was optioned to Richmond, though he was recalled Sept. 2. Kotchman and Gotay were activated Sept. 1. **Matt Diaz** (knee) and **Rafael Soriano** (elbow) were transferred to the 60-day DL Sept. 3, and DeSalvo was sent back to Richmond Sept. 4 and became a free agent when he refused the assignment.



SURGEON'S TABLE

Tom Glavine and **Chuck James** joined the list of surgically repaired pitchers. Glavine had the flexor tendon in his elbow repaired and also had his shoulder scoped to smooth the labrum. He hopes to be ready for spring training. James had his shoulder worked on for rotator cuff repair and smoothing his labrum. He should be back in the second half of next season.

Rafael Soriano, who's missed most of the season with elbow pain, also had nerve transposition surgery in his elbow Aug. 28 and should be ready for spring training.

See pages 24-26 for more on the injured Braves.

SHORT HOPS

A The Braves' 3-2 win against the Mets at Shea Stadium in the first of two games Sept. 13 snapped a major league record of 29 straight 1-run losses on the road.

A The Braves beat Florida, 16-14, on Sept. 2, the first time they'd won a game in spite of giving up 14 runs since July 23, 1951, against the Pirates.

A **Charlie Morton** was shut down in early September in the hopes that he would recover from soreness under his shoulder.

A **Yunel Escobar** grounded into three doubleplays at Washington Aug. 29 to tie the franchise single game record last set by **Joe Adcock** in 1955 and shared by **Walt Cruise** (1921). On Sept. 3, he grounded into his 24th of season to tie **Andruw Jones** and **Dale Murphy** for the Atlanta record.

A The Braves fell 20 games under .500 (59-79) Sept. 1, the first time they'd been that many under .500 since 1990.

A **Chipper Jones** hit his 20th home run of the season Aug. 30 to join Braves Hall of Fame third baseman **Eddie Mathews** as the only players in history to begin their careers with 14 consecutive seasons of at least 20 home runs. Since Jones had only three at-bats in 1993 and 1995 was his rookie season, it is regarded as his first season. See page 41 for more on this achievement.

LIKE LAST YEAR, WE NEED TO BUILD PITCHING DEPTH

IN SPITE OF THE WAY things have gone this year, I think we're in a situation where we have a pretty good foundation. There's no question that we have to make some moves in order to improve. But I don't think it's a long-range project. I think it could happen pretty quickly.

To the old saying about, "Is the glass half empty or half full?" I would say the glass is a little more than half full.

I'm encouraged by what I see in our farm system, and I'm encouraged by a good number of players on our big league club.

We've got to improve our pitching and power production, but those are do-able things. In terms of which is most important, I think pitching is always the most-important aspect of the game. There's no debating that. If you have pitching, the better it is, the less you need to hit.

I'm not sure that the offensive help we need is available right away in our farm system, but we do have very good offensive talent coming in a couple of years.

As far as pitching help from within the system, there are some kids who can pitch quickly at the major league level and need to do so in the next couple of years. In terms of the young guys we've seen up here this year, they got their feet wet, and they need to be better prepared next year.

I think what James Parr has shown in his two starts so far (12 innings, 0 runs) proves what our people have said all along, and that's that James probably has the best plan going into a game of any of the young pitchers in our system.

James won't overwhelm with his stuff, and because of that, I think some people were surprised we brought him to the big leagues and were surprised that Bobby gave him a start. But that's an example of why you can't judge everything at face value, and that's from the standpoint that I'm not sure I ever saw anything in the media where James' name came up as an up-and-coming prospect.

We had pretty high regard for him, though, and I'd say he validated our hopes for him this year.

It's certainly a possibility that we could decide to build up the offense with more speed. That's always a desire - to get more athletic and get more speed involved in the game. But there's got to be an offensive component with that speed, players who can run but who also can hit.

The really good news is that all of our pitchers in rehab are doing very well at this point - Peter Moylan, John Smoltz, Tim Hudson and Tom Glavine.

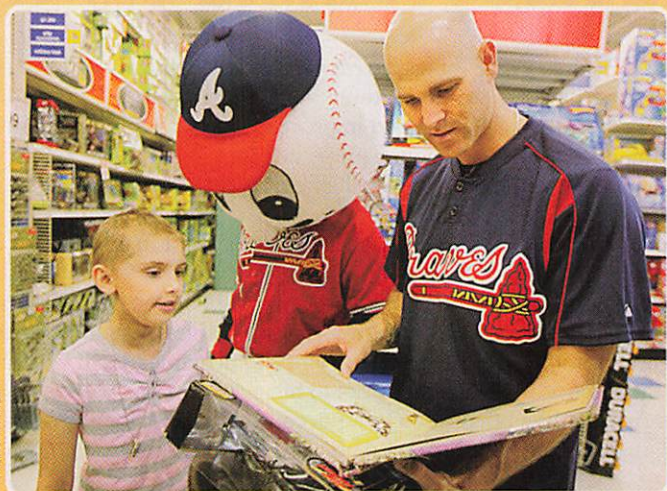
Plus, Mike Hampton is pitching very well for someone who's basically been out for three years. We're open to Mike coming back. I think there's a clear spot for Mike if he continues to do well. We need to do what we did last year and get as much pitching depth as possible.

One player we'll be keeping a close eye on this winter is (Mississippi centerfielder) Jordan Schafer. He's going to play in Mexico. He had a real good second half, and that has put him back in position to be the kind of player we thought he was a year ago and still think he is.

I'd say Freddie Freeman (first baseman at Rome who hit .316 with 18 home runs and 45 RBIs in 130 games and just turned age 19), at the minor league level, and Jorge Campillo, at the major league level, have been the two most pleasant surprises in our organization this year. And Jair Jurrjens, to some extent. Jorge is solidly in the plan for next year. We felt Jair would go a great job, but not necessarily this early.

“WE’VE GOT TO IMPROVE OUR PITCHING AND OUR POWER PRODUCTION, BUT THOSE ARE DO-ABLE THINGS.”

VOTE FOR HUDSON



Tim Hudson visits with 9-year-old Raven Anderson during last December's Holiday With the Hudsons party and shopping spree with Make A Wish children.

THE BRAVES nominated **Tim Hudson** for this year's **Roberto Clemente** Award. One overall winner is selected from 30 nominees, one from each club. The award recognizes the player who best exemplifies baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and contribution to his team. It's named in honor of the Hall of Fame Pirates outfielder who died in a plane crash while attempting to transport relief supplies to earthquake-stricken Nicaragua on Dec. 31, 1972.

Fans can participate in the selection process through Oct. 5 by voting at mlb.mlb.com/mlb/fan_forum/chevy-clemente. The fan ballot winner will be tallied as one vote among those cast by a special selection panel of baseball dignitaries and media members. The panel includes Commissioner **Bud Selig** and Clemente's widow, **Vera**. The winner will be announced during the World Series.

Hudson and his wife, **Kim**, provide generosity throughout the Atlanta community. Their favorite charities are the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. **John Smoltz** won the Clemente Award in 2005, **Dale Murphy** in 1988 and **Phil Niekro** in 1980.

GOLF SEASON

The 12th Annual **Phil Niekro** Golf Classic is Thursday, Nov. 6, at Chateau Elan Resort in Braselton, Ga. The cost is \$200 per team or \$800 per player, with proceeds benefiting the Edmondson-Telford Center for Children (etcenterforchildren.org). For information, contact **Jane Carpenter** at (770) 287-2693 or cjcarpenter@bellsouth.net.

The sixth **Chipper Jones** Celebrity Golf Tournament is Monday, Nov. 3, at Bears Best Atlanta Golf Course in Suwanee, Ga. This year's event will put money raised for charity at over \$1 million. For information, call **Stacy Turner** at (386) 822-8000.

BAG LADIES

The Atlanta Braves Wives held their fifth annual "Brown Bag Bonanza" Aug. 16 to benefit the Atlanta Braves Foundation and Camp Erin Atlanta.

Players' and coaches' wives including **Kim Hudson**, **Allyson Ohman**, **Ronnie Snitker**, **Meredith Sammons**, **Ginsey Boyer**, **Deidamia Campillo**, **Gissia Nunez**, **Yohanna Infante**, **Rachel Bennett** and **Jaena Norton** sold more than 750 autographed baseballs,

cloaked in brown paper bags, at Turner Field. Fans purchased the brown bags for a flat fee of \$40, then opened the bags to see what autograph they received.

Camp Erin is a bereavement camp designed for children ages 6-17 who have experienced the death of a parent, friend or loved one. It is a weekend-long experience filled with traditional, fun, camp activities combined with grief education and emotional support — facilitated by grief professionals and trained volunteers.

THE MAN

Tom Glavine is one of the 30 franchise nominees for the **Marvin Miller** Man of the Year Award presented by the Major League Baseball Players Association annually since 1997 to a player elected by his peers as the one who best combines on-field performance with community service. Fan voting through Sept. 14 was to determine six finalists, and the players were to vote Sept. 17 for the winner of this award and other Players Choice Awards that will be announced after the World Series. The award is named after the first executive director of the Players Association.

Glavine has donated time and resources

to the community in both Atlanta and New York.

John Smoltz won the Man of the Year award in 2002 and '03.

HOMETOWN HERO

The Braves honored former Negro Leagues first baseman **James "Red" Moore** with a personalized jersey in an on-field ceremony prior to the Sept. 9 game at Turner Field. Moore, 92, played in the Negro Leagues from 1935-48 for his hometown Atlanta Black Crackers and later with the Baltimore Elite Giants. He's lived most of his life in Atlanta and was considered one of the best fielding first basemen in Negro League history. In June, the Braves also honored Moore by making him their honorary selection before the First-Year Player Draft.

AT THE MIC

Fans can vote to determine the finalists for the **Ford C. Frick** Award through September at baseballhalloffame.org/awards/frick. Names on the ballot include **Skip Caray**, **Chip Caray**, **Joe Simpson** and **Pete Van Wieren**, as well as former Braves broadcasters **Earl**



Gillespie, Ernie Johnson, Dave O'Brien, John Sterling and Don Sutton, and former Braves players Mark Grant, Al Hrabosky, Tom Paciorek, Claude Raymond and Bob Walk. The award is presented annually to one broadcaster who has made major contributions to the game, and the winner is recognized at the Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Cooperstown. Fans can vote for up to three names.

The final ballot will be composed of the top three fan selections along with seven other candidates determined by a Hall of Fame staff research team and announced Oct. 6. The Frick ballot will then be considered by the Frick electorate, which includes all living winners of the award (including former Braves broadcaster Milo Hamilton and former Braves catcher Bob Uecker and five historians appointed by the Hall of Fame). The winner will be announced Dec. 9 at the Winter Meetings in Las Vegas.

BALLS & STRIKES

A **Jair Jurrjens** signed autographs at B.P. Sports Collectibles in the Atlanta suburb of Marietta on Sept. 20. **Jason Heyward**, one of the Braves' top prospects, is scheduled to be among the autograph guests at B.P.'s Autograph and Collectibles Show Nov. 14-16 at the Cobb County Civic Center. Call (678) 355-9990 or visit bpsports.com for information. Show hours are 3-9 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

A **Hank Aaron** was among the guests at the final Braves Power Lunch of the season Sept. 11 at Maggiano's. **Terry Pendleton**, **Josh Anderson** and **Clint Sammons** also attended.

A The Braves held the second Bark in the Park of the season Sept. 7 when fans could bring their pre-registered canines to the game.

A Former Braves **Keith Lockhart** and **Charlie Puleo** signed autographs at Turner Field Sept. 7 during Alumni Meet & Greet.

A Members of the Atlanta Fire Department and the Atlanta Police Department were on the field for a special ceremony on 9/11 Remembrance Night.

FINDING A POWER BAT IS A MAJOR NECESSITY

THE SEASON had a few down sides. First, we had a ton of injuries. Frank Wren did a great job of putting the club together all winter. He did nothing but the right things, and it blew up.

Mike Hampton, who we hoped would be ready at the beginning of the season, was out for almost four months. Three arms in the starting rotation, John Smoltz, Tim Hudson and Tom Glavine, went down.

You can lose position players and, if your pitching holds up, you can still win. It all boils down to the pitchers. When you lose 75 percent of the starting rotation, you're going to be in a little bit of trouble.

Losing Rafael Soriano and Peter Moylan for most of the season was huge. They were our eighth- and ninth-inning guys. And Mike Gonzalez wasn't here at the start of the season either.

All that said, there were some surprises and up sides to this season. Jair Jurrjens and Jorge Campillo got a chance to pitch, and in September we've seen the kid, James Parr, come on strong. Charlie Morton and Jo-Jo Reyes both showed flashes of major league capabilities, but it's got to be on a more consistent basis.

Once Mike Hampton was able to come back, I felt he did extremely well for someone who had been out of baseball for three years. He pitched well enough this season to continue pitching next year if he wants to.

I think everybody has to earn a job next year. The organization will look hard at free agency and for any trades that will help us stabilize our pitching. There is some money to spend, that's for sure. It would be the very best if we could promote our pitchers from within.

We've seen up sides in our position players. Chipper Jones hit .400 for a time and has been battling it out for the batting title again this year. That's a big deal. Both Kelly Johnson and Yunel Escobar have good years. Jeff Francoeur is coming out of his little slump and hopefully is on track to be the player we know he can be next year.

We're giving everybody a chance to play right now. We've enjoyed seeing Brandon Jones, Gregor Blanco, Josh Anderson and Brent Lillibridge. They're all getting their opportunity. I think they've all done reasonably well.

We tend to forget that Martin Prado was out for two months, and Omar Infante was out a month at the beginning and didn't really have a spring training. Those little things add up, but they've come through and shown themselves to be good players.

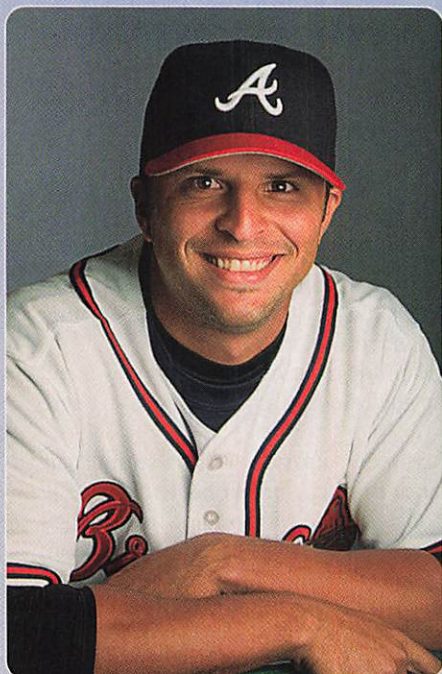
It will be important for the Braves to pick up a big bat for the lineup. We don't really know if our young guys are going to develop into power hitters. Hopefully, we'll see someone like Brandon Jones develop in that direction. The main thing our young players need to do to help their chances for success is consistency.

I honestly do have a good attitude coming to the ballpark every day, even during the tough times we've gone through this season. I demand it of myself, and I've always been that way.

I get to play the game of baseball. I've played, I've managed, I've coached and worked in the front office. It's fun for me, as it should be. This year, we've lost more than we've won, but it's still fun to come to the ballpark.

What I miss is the stretch run into September and going to the playoffs. We live for that. You can't cry about it. You go on about your business. It's all about keeping baseball, the way you make your living, in proper perspective.

“THE ORGANIZATION WILL LOOK HARD AT FREE AGENCY AND FOR ANY TRADES THAT WILL HELP US STABILIZE OUR PITCHING.”



ALLISON SHAPPEERS

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

Q: After spending close to two months on the disabled list for a sprained left thumb, how does it feel now? Is it 100 percent yet?

A: My thumb is okay. It's probably not 100 percent, and it bothers me a little bit sometimes, but it's not a big deal.

Q: It didn't keep you from hitting .432 in 74 at-bats in August. What happened? Did you do anything different?

A: I guess I just got lucky.

Q: Oh, come on... that wasn't luck. Were you just seeing the ball better?

A: The whole time I was on the DL, I was working on a lot of stuff with my approach and getting mentally ready to come back strong and do my thing. I needed to get better as a hitter and a fielder, and everything has worked out. I didn't waste my time while I was on the DL.

Q: You're very versatile, playing all over the infield, even playing first base lately. Which

Though the Braves had a rugged August, Prado led the majors with a .432 average (32-for-74) for the month with 12 multi-hit games.

is your favorite position to play?

A: It's tough to say. I just want to be in the lineup. Probably I'm most comfortable at second base. I've played there since I signed (2001). It's easier for me, but I'm happy to play the other positions as well.

Q: Who's the most influential teammate you've had or have now?

A: We're a team, and we all help each other. But Omar Infante is probably the one I talk to the most. We talk a lot about baseball. He's been here longer than me in this business, so he knows more than me. He speaks Spanish, so it's not as difficult to talk to him. I talk with him and our hitting coach (Terry Pendleton) and Greg Norton. They're all good mentors for me. They've been long in the game, they know the game and they know all the little things you need to know to stay in the game.

Q: Growing up in Venezuela, which team did you follow when you were a kid?

A: You're not going to believe this, but it was the Atlanta Braves. There are a lot of people in Venezuela that follow the Braves. We got some of the games on television. Chipper Jones is a huge guy in Venezuela. At the time

fan of Galarraga, but I didn't know I would get his number. When I did get No. 14, I was so proud of it.

Q: Last September 12, you put a ball in play against the New York Mets, dropped your bat, and took off for first. But your bat stayed standing straight upright on the end of the barrel for a few seconds. Did you know this happened?

A: I didn't know it happened. The guys were talking about it in the dugout when I got back in there. They asked, "You saw what you did?" I said, "No... I didn't run hard?" They said, "No, you hustled - but the bat!" I asked if I broke it and they said, "No, when you let it go, the bat stood up!" I said, "That's not true." But then I saw it on YouTube.

Q: You had a reputation in the minors as having a "magic bat." Why is that? Who started that?

A: That's from the game last year against the Mets and I was facing Billy Wagner. I hit the ball, flipped the bat, and it stood straight up. That's where that came from.

Q: How old were you when you felt you were really good enough to play in the major leagues?

A: I always had in my mind that I could do it. When I played in (Class A) Rome (2004), I

I WAS A BIG FAN OF GALARRAGA, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW I WOULD GET HIS NUMBER. WHEN I DID GET NO. 14, I WAS SO PROUD OF IT.

when Andres Galarraga played for the Braves (1998-2000) was when people in Venezuela really followed the Braves, and Chipper Jones and Andruw Jones became really popular. John Smoltz was really popular.

Q: Galarraga wore No. 14 when he was with the Braves. Is that why you wear it?

A: No, I've always liked the number, even when I played in Little League. I was a big

had a pretty good year (.315), and even in rookie ball, we won a championship (2003). I got an opportunity to show them that I could be here. I got my call up to the big leagues, and I realized I was ready to play here. Some guys have skills, but you have to develop it to get better and better. There are a lot of guys who are naturals. They don't really have to work to be a star. But not everybody can be like that. I'm one of those guys who has to work hard to see the results.

Q: What would you be doing if you weren't a professional baseball player?

A: I always wanted to be an engineer. I went to college for six months, but I decided that I would pursue baseball. Now I think I would want to be a baseball coach. I'd like to teach little guys how to play ball. If I couldn't be a coach, maybe I could be a surfer.

Q: A surfer? Do they have surfing in Venezuela?

A: Yes. I'm not doing it now, but I've done it and I would like to get better at it.

Q: Which pitcher do you least like to face and why?

A: Probably Josh Johnson with the Marlins. He's 6-feet, 6-inches, he's a big guy, and just the simple fact that he doesn't give up any pitches. It's hard for me to tell what's coming. He pounds the corners.

Q: If time and money wasn't an issue and you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?

A: I would want to go to Prague. I have friends who went there and liked it. I was looking through a travel magazine and saw photos of Prague and thought it looked like an amazing place. I'm big fan of all different cultures. I want to discover a lot of places, and that's a place I dream about visiting.

Q: How much first base have you played in winter ball?

A: Last season, I played about five games at first base during winter ball. But it's not the same there as it is here in the big leagues. In winter ball, they play very aggressively. Here it's more technical. It was pretty good preparation for me when I played first here.

Q: Were you surprised when you were asked to play first base here?

A: They didn't ask me, they just told me I'd be playing first.

Q: Was there any warning? Had you taken

infield there?

A: No, they just asked, "Do you know how to play first?" And I said, "Yeah, I'll try it." I just want to be in the lineup, no matter what.

Q: When you play second base, you always seem eager to help baserunners get their shin guard or other equipment to the first base coach. Why are you so polite?

A: I'm really just trying to keep the game moving. It doesn't make sense for the runner to have to run all the way back to give the gear to his coach.



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Q: You've always been a good hitter in the minors, but you seem to hit even better in the majors? Why is that? Do you try to develop more power?

A: I don't know, but I think I've had more opportunities to hit against major league pitching. I've had more at-bats and learned more about pitchers. When you get to know the pitchers, you know how they'll approach you, and you can have success. My natural swing goes to right field. I've never worked on, "I've got to pull (the ball)." The few

times I tried to pull the ball, I opened my hands too soon and everything falls apart, because it's not natural.

Q: What's your family like?

A: My parents were divorced when I was 9 years old. I have two older brothers, Pedro and Emerson, and an older sister, Caroline. They live in Maracay. I also have a sister on my dad's side.

Q: Did your brothers play baseball, also?

A: They played baseball, but not professional. So, they were so excited when I started playing pro ball. When I play winter ball, they don't miss any games. They're very proud of me.

Q: How did you start playing baseball?

A: I started playing when I was 4 years old. That's a long time ago! I played Little League in Venezuela when I was growing up and got to represent my country playing in Japan, Mexico. My older brothers have been like father figures for me, in bad moments and good moments. They are always there. In a family, they treat you the same, no matter how you do. It's one thing about this time of year, late in the season, that's so difficult. I miss my family so much. I talk to them almost every day, and they try to keep me upbeat. They tell me, "Just a few more weeks and you'll be home. Stay focused." It's hard for me to stay focused, because this has been a hard year for the team. It's been frustrating losing. When I go home at night, it's hard for me to sleep. I try to take a lot on me. I put a lot of pressure on myself to help the team. It's something that players do. They put so much pressure on their shoulders. But it's not something one guy can do. It has to be all nine guys. This is my personality, to take on a lot of pressure.

Q: Who was most influential to you when you first began playing baseball?

A: No question, it was my mother, Irma. She never missed a game, not even close. In 15 years growing up playing ball, she never missed a game. Even if we didn't have a lot of money, she found the money to come to my games.

RETURN WITH *Honor*

Gonzalez Leads The Way For Others
To Follow In Comeback From Elbow Surgery

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

FOR MIKE GONZALEZ, the second half of the season has been a welcome relief.

"It's good to be back, throwing, helping the team win," said the 30-year-old lefty who stepped back into the closer's job with incredible effectiveness after rehabilitating from ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) replacement surgery - commonly known as Tommy John surgery after the pitcher who first had the procedure in 1974.

"I've said it's the toughest thing I've ever done in my life, going through that injury and rehab," said Gonzalez, who underwent the surgical procedure May 31, 2007. "But I gained so much from it. I've matured so much as a baseball player, as a pitcher. Patience has taken my game to a different level."

The Braves can only hope that Peter Moylan and Tim Hudson will bounce back as quickly and effectively from the same operation as Gonzalez, who converted his first nine save opportunities, running his personal string to 39, the longest in the majors, until finally blowing a save Sept. 9.

In fact, Gonzalez was thrown right into the fire June 18, barely a year after his surgery, and recorded a save in his very first outing of the season. He retired the Rangers in order in the ninth inning to preserve a 5-2 victory at Texas. It was his first save since May 11, 2007, and the Houston native did it in front of some very special fans, as well. Over 50 family and friends, some he hadn't seen since elementary school, showed up to cheer him.

"My family is my support system," he said. "My parents were there, my sisters, and a lot of friends and other people. It was a great night after a long road back."

The Braves had high expectations when they acquired Gonzalez (and Brent Lillibridge) in a trade with the Pittsburgh

Pirates in exchange for Adam LaRoche (and Jamie Romak) on Jan. 19, 2007. After all, Gonzalez had just established career highs in appearances (54), saves (24), innings (54) and strikeouts (64) in his fourth big-league season. In addition to converting all 24 of his save opportunities, he entered 2007 with a personal string of 28 consecutive saves, best in the majors, dating to Aug. 16, 2004. And while his 2006 season ended early (he shut down on Aug. 24 due to elbow tendonitis), the problem was seen as a blip on an otherwise crystal-clear radar.

But storm clouds were brewing.

Discomfort returned to Gonzalez's elbow during the first two weeks in April. But an MRI on April 19 showed no tears, and Gonzalez assumed he was in the clear. Then he noticed a major drop in velocity in May during appearances at Pittsburgh and Washington. It wasn't until he underwent a contrast MRI on May 18 that a tear was found in the UCL. It was below the elbow, rather than on the top of the elbow, very similar to the tear found in Hudson in August.

"It's a little more uncommon," Gonzalez said. "The tear wasn't too bad, but the place it was torn was affecting the velocity on my pitches. I couldn't sacrifice the velocity. You're talking about 13 miles per hour, and that's my bread and butter. I'm not Tom Glavine or Greg Maddux!"

So, in spite of having a 1.59 ERA (17 innings) at the time, Gonzalez had to put his career on hold. On May 31, Dr. James Andrews performed surgery at his clinic in Birmingham, Ala., leaving Gonzalez to face 12 to 18 months of rehabilitation.

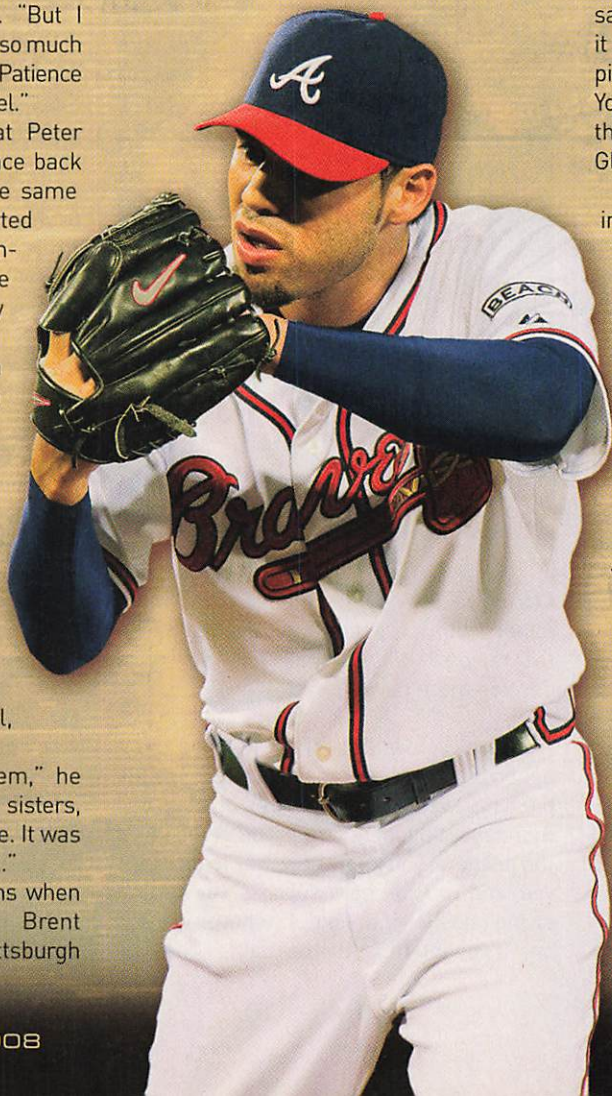
"I approached my surgery as though I'd take a year off and would be back after the time was up," he said. "I went to Birmingham by myself, but when I woke up (from surgery), my father was there. A good friend of ours was there, also."

Gonzalez told his dad he was ready to eat.

"I wasn't groggy or nauseous at all," he said. "I was hungry and wanted a Ruth's Chris filet. They went and got me one!"

After spending the night in Birmingham, they drove back to Houston where Gonzalez convalesced for a week.

"I wore the stabilizing brace and took pain medications for about a week," he said. "The pain wasn't too bad, but it's the little things you for-



get, making quick movements without thinking about it. Getting through the first couple of weeks is tough, but then it's fine."

Gonzalez loves being with his family in the off-season, but made the decision to do his rehab with the Braves physical therapist, Lloyd Van Pamelen (May '08 CT) at Gwinnett Sports Rehab, a physical therapy clinic in the Atlanta suburb of Duluth. Van Pamelen is in his fourth season with the team, though he's been doing off-season work with them since 1995.

"Lloyd's got a good track record. He knows what he's doing," said Gonzalez. "In the beginning, I was kind of against it, because he wasn't as aggressive [as I wanted to be]. But I began to understand why he did things the way he did and the way he does his business. He's had some great success stories.

"It's tough when you have a personality like mine to give people the room to do what they do. You clash every once in a while, but in the end, he knows his stuff and he wouldn't have those successes if he didn't know what he was doing."

Van Pamelen follows established rehabilitation protocols. The highlights include developing a full range of motion within four to six weeks. By 12 weeks, players progress to weighted ball exercises and plyometrics, a type of training designed to develop quick, powerful movements. At 16 weeks, players progress to easy throwing (30 to 45 feet, dependent on physician preference).

"Guys don't even show up with a glove until four months," Van Pamelen said.

Finally, a structured, "off-mound" throwing program begins at six to eight months.

Van Pamelen is quick to caution that just because a player's range of motion returns, it doesn't mean he gets to begin throwing.

"I think (waiting), from the athlete's perspective, is the most frustrating part," said Van Pamelen. "If the surgeon's done his job, the rehab specialists are doing their job, and the player is doing his job, they're bored. I tell athletes, 'It's good you're bored now.'"

Studies done at Andrews' clinic and through the American Sports Medicine Institute have proven that the post-operative timetable needs to be followed or else the athlete risks the long-term success of the surgery.

"Getting their range of motion is a good first step," said Van Pamelen. "If they get it early, great. It means that when they finally get to throw, it will probably be easier."

Gonzalez was one of those lucky guys.

"My range of motion was great right away when I came back," he said. "The hardest thing for me was waiting until I could throw!"

He was also fortunate he didn't suffer any major setbacks to slow him down.

"Scar tissues, adhesions those are expected things," said Van Pamelen. "Tendinitis in either the elbow or the shoulder is typical, because you're using a joint at a high level of intensity that you haven't been using for awhile."

Gonzalez watched the post-op timeline like a hawk.

"That was what really got me going," he said. "I'd look at the protocols and see what I would be doing in the future, how long it would be before I could throw or lift heavier weights. Those were good, because they kept you going, they kept you alive. The biggest moment was the four-month spot when you get to start throwing again."

Asked if he was tentative when he made

side to side, inhaling and exhaling rapidly.

"I was having a hard time getting 'up' for games that didn't really mean anything," he explained of the unusual windup. "I used the motion to get into a rhythm. It made me feel more intense."

He kept the motion once he returned to the big leagues.

Though his velocity hadn't completely returned in the first two months back in the Atlanta bullpen, Gonzalez said he believed his approach to pitching has improved to make up for that.

"In the past, I wasn't as much of a student of pitching," he said. "My philosophy was, 'I'll just blow it by you, and hit it if you can.' Now I don't have the velocity, so I had to make adjustments. That's what good pitchers do. They adjust to their surroundings."

There's a myth about Tommy John surgery, that the operation helps players throw harder. Van Pamelen said that's not neces-

"It was like riding a bike. Some guys are different. They would have the injury in the back of their mind. I played catch right away. I said, 'It's ready, thank God. It's healed - let's go.' I didn't think twice about it"

that first throw, Gonzalez shook his head adamantly.

"It was like riding a bike," he answered. "Some guys are different. They would have the injury in the back of their mind. I played catch right away. I said, 'It's ready, thank God. It's healed - let's go.' I didn't think twice about it."

Instead, Gonzalez attacked his return to throwing with his usual intensity.

"The standard rehab time is 12 to 18 months and usually closer to 18 months," he said. "I really wanted to pitch at 12 months."

Working intensely with Van Pamelen, Gonzalez made remarkable progress, in part because he humbled himself to the process. He took it slow, even when he didn't want to. By the time he finally threw a simulated inning in extended spring training on April 22, it took so few pitches to retire three batters that he ended up throwing another inning.

Along the way, he developed an unusual "windup" during his rehab assignments. He plants his left foot at the third base side of the pitcher's rubber with his right foot at shoulder width apart. Keeping his hands up high, almost in front of his face, with his left elbow parallel to the ground, he sways from

sarily true. Some pitchers will throw harder, especially 18 to 24 months after the operation, but it's not completely attributable to the surgery, he said.

"Many throwers have never had extended time off to focus on upper extremity strengthening. The long rehab time gives throwers that chance to improve not just their elbow, but also their core, shoulder and leg strength," said Van Pamelen. "Also, the extended time spent, as much as eight to 10 weeks, on long tossing up to 120 to 180 feet helps the rehabilitating athlete develop arm strength."

In many cases, it's the most stable the athlete's elbow has felt in years.

Gonzalez watched this year as Moylan and Hudson faced the prospect of the same surgery and rehab he went through. While his heart went out to them, he knew once they got over the initial shock and disappointment, they'd be fine.

"It all has to do with giving yourself that time to heal and working hard at coming back," he said. "Some guys don't have that in them, and you can obviously see that when they come back from Tommy John. They don't come back as well."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



I'M CAPABLE OF BEING AN EVERYDAY PLAYER

I THINK I'VE EARNED a spot on a major league roster. I have confidence in my ability and the fact that I can play baseball at this level.

I've had over 100 at-bats in the big leagues. I know there's a learning curve, but I feel that I'm capable of being an everyday major league player. That's what my goal has been and still is, and I don't think there's any reason for me to think it's not possible.

Being sent to Richmond at the end of spring training was a disappointment. My whole goal at the end of the 2007 season was to make the big league team, first in Houston, and then once I was traded, in Atlanta. That was my mindset, and I tried to do it without putting too much pressure on myself, which was tough because it was a new environment.

Once I got sent to Richmond, it was like anything in life. You ask yourself, "What am I going to do now?" And my mindset was, these are the cards I've been dealt. The best thing for me to do, instead of sulking and thinking negative thoughts, is to get in there, do the best I could do, and make it hard for them to leave me there.

That 27-game hitting streak I had in Richmond had a lot to do with the extra work I put in with our hitting coach, Chris Chambliss. Both he and manager Dave Brundage were phenomenal to play for.

Chris and I put countless hours in the batting cage. He was one of those

guys that would never turn down an opportunity to work with me. I knew he had played, and I picked his brain, kind of like what I've done with Terry Pendleton.

We talked about what I need to do to become the best I can be. A lot of our talks centered on me asking what I could

do to start driving the ball more. I felt like I was capable of it, and he did, too.

I needed to have more of an aggressive approach. It was mostly little things that other people wouldn't notice, and adjusting my mindset. We worked on getting set in the batter's box earlier, which gave me more time to see the ball and respond with good aggressive hacks.

Dave told me that I got a hit in my first at-bat 24 times during the 27-game hitting streak. I didn't even know that until he told me. It was an interesting stat. I think it was a result of taking my batting practice swing into the game.

It was amazing. At the time, I was so focused. It was calm confidence. I knew when I went up to bat I would get a hit. I was hitting all sorts of pitches, off-speed and fastballs. The confidence fed the sense that I believed that the pitcher wouldn't be able to get me out.

Working as much as I did away from the game also helped me, because the results I had in batting practice just showed up during the game. Chris was confident in my ability and encouraged me. Leon Roberts, the hitting coordinator, would come by and encourage me. I knew over the past five years that I was capable of doing more with the bat, and I started seeing the results this year.

I think I'll start seeing more power. Three of my four home runs in Richmond happened in the last month I was there. I'm not going to go into the winter saying, I've got to start hitting home runs or that I have to get huge. That's not really my game. I need to continue to develop what got me here.

I believe I can provide hits into the gaps, get doubles and extra-base hits, and because of my speed, can help the team. I don't want to change my mindset to become a power hitter. I have some power that will start showing up more and more as I mature.

"With Huddy and Moylan, their work ethic alone, they won't have a problem. As soon as Huddy gets the okay to be doing stuff, I can see him doing the same thing that Moylan did. Pete was trying to see how far he could move his arm, how far he could push it. It's the competitor in you."

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST...

The streak ended on Sept. 9. The Braves led Colorado, 4-3, when Bobby Cox called on Mike Gonzalez in the top of the ninth to close the game. However, the Rockies' first batter, Garrett Atkins, hit a game tying home run to end the longest active streak of save conversions in the majors.

The Braves still won the game, 5-4, in 10 innings, but Gonzalez's streak of 39 consecutive save conversions ended. The streak began on Aug. 16, 2004, when Gonzalez was a rookie with Pittsburgh. He blew his first three save opportunities before converting his fourth attempt Aug. 16 at Arizona. He was 3-for-3 in 2005, 24-for-24 in 2006, 2-for-2 in 2007, and 9-for-9 this year before Sept. 9.

"It's a great number, but there were plenty of chances for me to blow it," said Gonzalez of the streak. "Either the defense has picked me up, or I'd get a key strikeout. That's definitely one of those things where a lot of things have to go right at the time, and that's the way it was going."

Gonzalez says he's changed a lot since his first save.

"I've come a long way, and I mean a long way!" he said. "The fans don't ever know the mental stuff we put ourselves through. No one is harder on us than we are."

Gonzalez admitted that in addition to beating himself up mentally, he'd also take his frustrations out on the belongings in his locker if he didn't accomplish what he wanted on the mound. But the former "Gonzo" has been replaced by a less volatile "Gonzo."

"When I go out there in a save situation, I want to come in the clubhouse in a good mood," he said. "I know that the team has worked hard, and I'm going to go out there and give it all I have in the ninth inning. Whatever the outcome may be, the team will know I gave it 110 percent. I think I've earned that respect with the players. They know I'm not going out there to give anything less than everything I've got."

"At the same time, I'm not going to start hitting things, because I've got to pitch against the same guys tomorrow. I don't need to face them with bruised knuckles or a sore leg because I kicked something!"

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

**I BELIEVE I CAN
PROVIDE HITS INTO
THE GAPS, GET DOUBLES AND
EXTRA-BASE HITS, AND
BECAUSE OF MY SPEED,
CAN HELP THE TEAM.**

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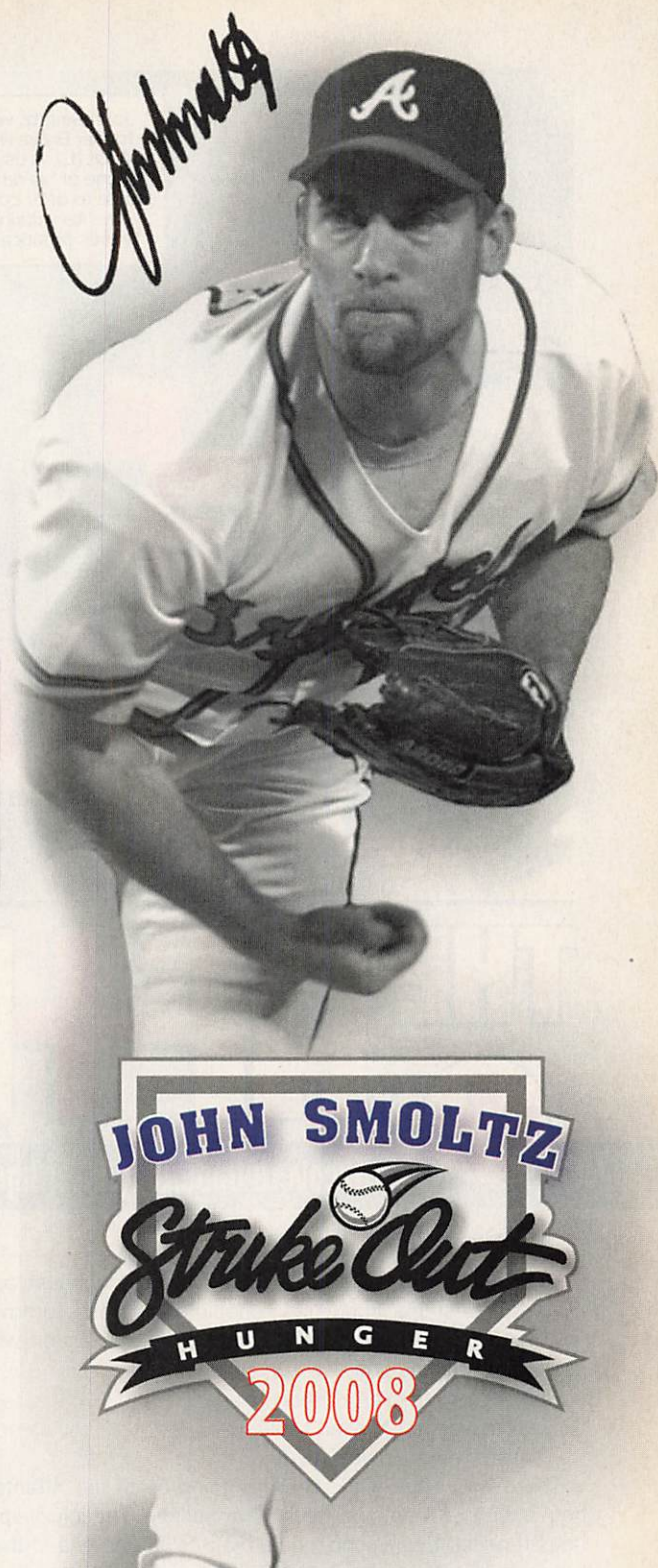
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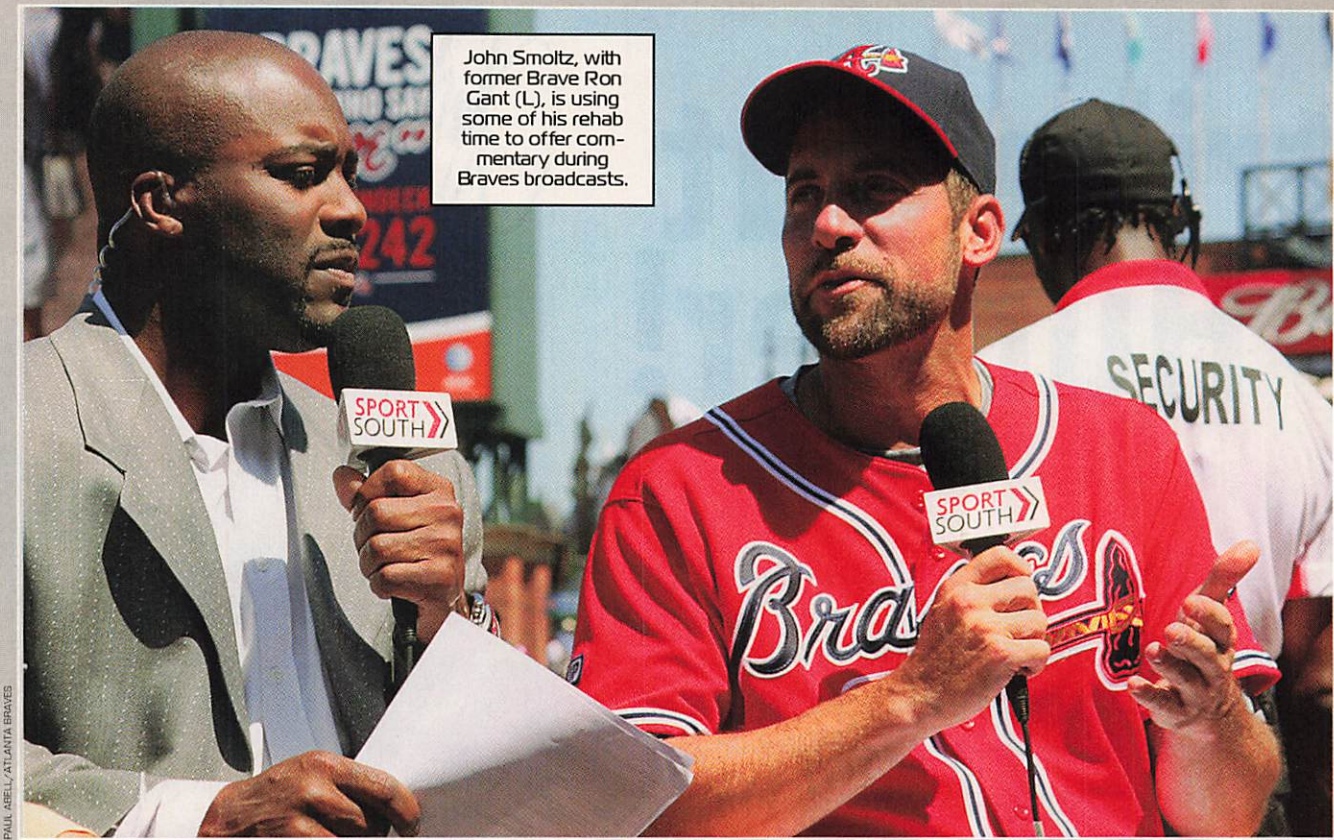
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THE AFTERMATH

Recovery Underway After Injuries Result in 1,100 Missed Games And Pitching Meltdown

BY RAY GLIER

Tim Hudson was standing in the Braves' clubhouse answering questions about his rehabilitation from Tommy John surgery on his right elbow when he was asked when he could start playing golf.

Hudson looked over at Peter Moylan.

"Twelve weeks," Moylan said.

"Twelve weeks," said Hudson.

There was a lot of file sharing going on in the Atlanta clubhouse the last month of the regular season. The injury epidemic helped wreck the season, and a walk from one end of the clubhouse to the other provides plenty of proof.

It's almost impossible to get very far without bumping into a pitcher with a protective, neoprene sleeve over his rebuilt or repaired elbow.

Hudson and Moylan had their seasons blow up and end with ligament replacement surgery. Tom Glavine underwent surgery for a torn tendon in his elbow, and the only good news is his golf game is on the shelf for a much shorter period of time than those who had to have their elbows rebuilt.

The list of disabled pitchers also includes John Smoltz, Chuck James, Anthony Lerew, and Rafael Soriano. Then there's also

another player making his way through rehab, leftfielder Matt Diaz, who experienced muscle fatigue in his repaired left knee and missed most of the season.

Glavine just shakes his head from side to side when asked about the bottleneck at the entrance to the rehab room near the clubhouse.

"It's a little crowded back there," he said. "When you start having to make appointments with the rehab guy, that is never a good thing. It's like the deli. You have to pull the 'now-serving' number."

The Braves pitching staff, which led the National League in ERA on July 1, unraveled quickly as the season progressed. Now, the Braves' calendar in December and January is full of dates circled in red with expected benchmarks of players who have been cut by a surgeon.

By Sept. 7, the Braves had 26 transactions to put players on the disabled list. The missed games for those transactions totals 1,100.

In addition, the Braves had 65 of 143 games started by rookie pitchers (28 by Jair Jurrjens, 21 by Jose Campillo, 15 by Charlie Morton, 1 by James Parr). Jo-Jo Reyes, who misses qualifying for rookie status by two-thirds of an inning, made 19 starts. That's 84

starts - 59 percent of the season.

Hudson, 33, and Moylan, 29, were the most distressing injuries because Hudson was the centerpiece of the starting staff and Moylan, a reliever, was coming off a sensational 2007 (5-3, 1.80 in 80 games as a rookie).

Hudson was 11-7 when he came off the mound against the Marlins on July 23 and started shaking his forearm to get rid of what he thought was just tightness. He had season-ending ligament replacement surgery Aug. 10.

"I feel like I'm ahead of schedule. I'm just a month out right now, but it doesn't feel as bad as I anticipated," said Hudson, who is completing the third year of a four-year contract extension. "My range of motion is coming back pretty well, and where I am right now, I am not discouraged by it by any means.

"I'm doing forearm exercises with two-pound weights, rotator cuff exercises with two-pound weights," he said. "Right now I'm trying to get the full range of motion back. I don't have it back yet, but for four weeks, I am ahead of schedule where I should be."

Hudson said he will throw for the first time in December and he has been cautioned to take it easy.

"People have told me if there's anything they would want to do differently is they wish they had thrown as soft as they could for a while," Hudson said. "Just play easy, easy catch instead of trying to go out and get ahead of schedule. It is a lot better to take baby steps once you do start throwing."

Moylan, who underwent surgery May 8, started throwing Sept. 2. It is an easy regimen of every other day, 30 to 50 throws from 45 feet.

"It's not pitching, it's playing catch - just rolling it over," he said.

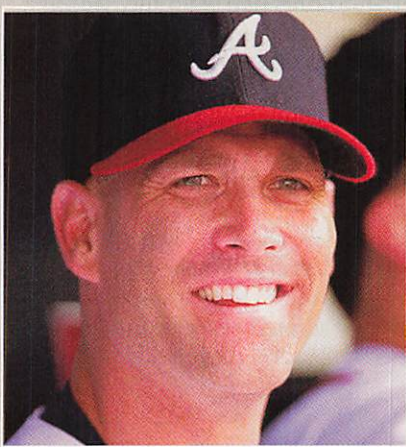
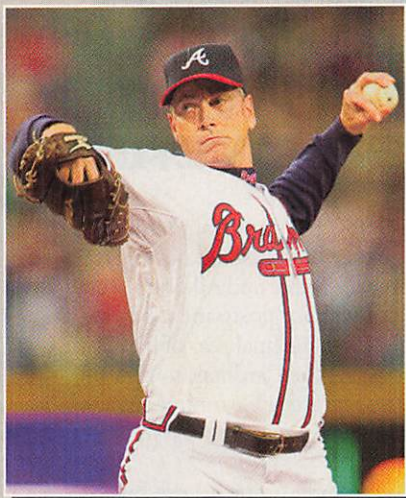
Moylan turned his arm over to show the incision along the line of scales of the fish tattoo on his arm. He said it felt "weird" to grip a baseball for the first time in four months.

"It feels good, and then you want to throw harder, but you have to stay within yourself at 50 to 60 percent, which is where they want me to be," said Moylan, who had a 1.59 ERA in seven appearances when he was injured.

Moylan said he can get on the mound for the first time in November.

"My main date is May 1, that's my date to be back in the major leagues," Moylan said. "I had my surgery on the 8th (of May), so it will be almost 12 months."

Glavine's first benchmark date is Oct. 1 when he goes back to see Dr. James Andrews, who repaired the torn tendon in the southpaw's elbow.



PHOTOS: PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Tom Glavine (from top) wonders if he'll pitch again after surgery to repair a torn tendon, Tim Hudson says he's ahead of schedule following elbow surgery, and Matt Diaz is slowly making his way back from a knee injury.

"That will be about six weeks and, hopefully, I can start getting more aggressive with working out and I can start playing golf," said Glavine, who turns 43 in March. "January 1 probably will be the time I can start playing catch. If I have a job, I will throw more aggressively. If I don't have a job, I'll throw just to see how it feels when I play catch with the kids."

Smoltz, 41, had surgery on the labrum in his right shoulder on June 10, which included putting eight plastic anchors in his labrum and rotator cuff, shaving bone, and removing bone spurs. He had an encouraging checkup with Andrews Sept. 11.

"I won't throw until October, and I don't know when I am going to throw off the mound, but I'm going to know as soon as I start playing catch what my chances are," Smoltz said.

"I've heard all the horror stories about shoulder surgery, and they are legit. But I am working through it. I would rather have two more Tommy John surgeries than deal with the shoulder. There was a lot done."

Soriano, the 28-year-old reliever who was supposed to be the closer this year, had ulnar nerve transposition surgery Aug. 28. His elbow is still wrapped, but he said there is no pain.

"I will pitch in spring training. That is when I am ready," he said.

James underwent shoulder surgery Sept. 9 in Birmingham, Ala., with Dr. Andrews, and the lefthander is going to be out at least until the All-Star break.

"It's lingered for two years, and it has been frustrating," said James, who had both his labrum and rotator cuff repaired, the reason he's experienced shoulder trouble since before last year's All-Star break.

Representing the position players in the rehab room is Diaz, 30. He tore the posterior cruciate ligament in his left knee May 28 and expected to miss just six weeks. However, muscle fatigue robbed him of most of the season.

"It was the lack of muscle around the knee that was caused from resting the knee," Diaz said. "The knee needed to heal, but it needed to be built up, so we were caught in a Catch-22. When the leg buckled, we assumed it was the knee, but we came to find out it was actually the muscle."

Diaz had an appointment Sept. 23 to see a knee specialist in Colorado and was hoping to get cleared to play.

"Just in time for the season to end," he said with a sigh.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



AROUND BASEBALL

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

PUJOLS LIKELY TO WAIT ON SURGERY FOR A YEAR

CARDINALS FIRST BASEMAN Albert Pujols does not want to undergo elbow reconstructive (Tommy John) surgery after this season, knowing his recovery would force him to miss the World Baseball Classic and All-Star Game in St. Louis in 2009. Pujols needs the surgery, but will not postpone it beyond next off-season and risk blowing out the elbow in 2010, the final year of his contract. He would prefer to return early in '10, persuade the Cardinals to pick up his option for '11, and be fully recovered by the time he is eligible for free agency.

Evidently Dodgers leftfielder **Manny Ramirez** found a miracle cure for the sore knee that supposedly hindered him during his final days with the Red Sox. It's called "pending free agency." A scout recently clocked Ramirez from home to first in 4.48 seconds – a major improvement on his running times with the Red Sox. "It was the fastest I've ever gotten him," the scout said. "I couldn't believe it." Padres general manager **Kevin Towers** paid Ramirez the ultimate compliment, comparing his impact to that of **Barry Bonds**.

Kevin Towers on the Padres' collapse this season: "We all are to blame. The entire organization. It's the coaching staff. It's the front office. It's the players. We all should be held accountable. We have to look as a front office at what the mistakes were, where the mistakes were." The Padres are expected to go with a youthful look in 2009, but still believe they can compete in the mediocre NL West.

Diamondbacks second baseman **Orlando Hudson**, who underwent season-ending surgery on his left wrist in August, is almost certain to be a hot free agent. Hudson would fit for the Mets if they traded **Luis Castillo**, or with the Yankees if they traded **Robinson Cano**. The Rangers could sign Hudson and move **Ian Kinsler** off second. The White Sox could sign him and move **Alexei Ramirez** to shortstop. Other possible suitors include the Indians, Rockies and Cardinals.

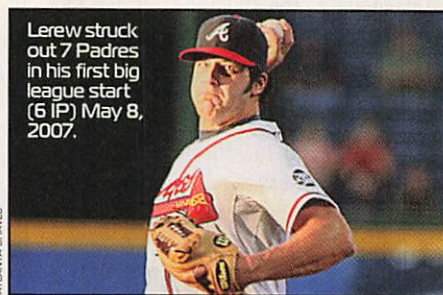
The lively trade market for sluggers also could include Phillies first baseman **Ryan Howard** and Brewers first baseman **Prince Fielder**, a scenario that could work to the Giants' benefit as they seek to add offense. The Giants obviously do not want to trade **Tim Lincecum** or **Matt Cain**, but at the very least, they could suck up a contract or two. Mariners third baseman **Adrian Beltre**, earning \$12 million next season in the final year of his contract, is among those on the Giants' wish list, according to a rival executive.

Diamondbacks outfielder **Adam Dunn**, a potential free agent, greatly enjoyed playing in his first pennant race. "I know what I want now – to be in this situation every single year for the rest of my career." Dunn, a career .222 hitter in September before this season, admits that with the Reds he would start thinking about football season and hunting season when the team was out of contention. "When you've got something to play for, your mind doesn't wander," he said.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

+ LEREW ON REBOUND +



Lerew struck out 7 Padres in his first big league start (6 IP) May 8, 2007.

THERE WERE FITS and starts along the way, but by the end of the minor league season, righthander Anthony Lerew finally felt like himself again.

Lerew, who underwent Tommy John surgery in June 2007, allowed just one run and five hits in seven innings to pick up an impressive win Aug. 31 at Richmond, where he was 1-4, 4.14 overall in nine games. He struggled with control in his previous two outings, walking nine.

"My mechanics were terrible," said Lerew, who appeared in 11 games (3 starts) for Atlanta the previous three seasons. "I started working with (pitching coach) Guy Hansen and got some things worked out."

Hansen saw Lerew, 25, rushing his delivery, throwing off his mechanics.

"I was fine once I got to the stretch," said Lerew, who is 42-33 with a 3.34 ERA in his minor league career. "But it was when I was in my windup where I was walking people."

The two worked in a bullpen session, and Hansen suggested Lerew try a full windup delivery.

"I threw one bullpen (using the motion) and in the game (Aug. 31) and it worked. It clicked," he said.

The win was a huge confidence boost for Lerew, who will be out of minor league options going into next season.

"I'm just glad I finished strong and had a good outing," he said. "My last start, I was picking where I wanted the ball and getting it there, actually pitching instead of throwing it over the middle!"

Lerew said his arm feels good and that his velocity is around 93 to 95 miles per hour. He will continue preparations for 2009 by playing winter ball.

"As far as I know, we are still intending on him playing in Mexico for the Navajoa Club with several of our other players," said Frank Wren. "This will allow him to make up some of the lost time he's had over the last two years."

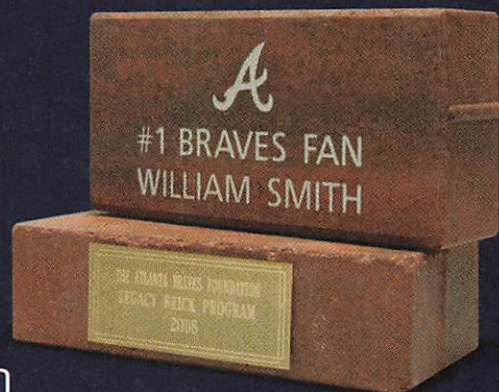
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A CATCHER'S

Tales From Behind The Mask
Reveal What It's Like
To Wear All That Gear

Life

It's 2001, and former Braves catcher and current bullpen coach Eddie Perez - then a catcher for Cleveland - is standing on the mound along with the pitcher and Indians manager Charlie Manuel.

"It was the third inning, the pitcher was giving up runs, and Manuel had come to take him out," recalled Perez. "The pitcher said, 'Charlie, I'm fine, don't take me out. I still feel okay. I'm not tired.' And Charlie replied, 'Kid, you're not tired, but my outfielders are all tired.' Everybody laughed, and the pitcher just gave the ball to Charlie and walked off."

Welcome to the wild world of catching, a position that demands that players combine mental preparation with physical tenacity.

Whether bracing for a collision at home plate, poring over scouting reports, yapping it up with an umpire, or laughing about a batter who's just passed gas, there's rarely a dull moment for catchers. Yet for many fans, the nuances of the position remain a mystery.

According to Braves catchers past and present, the mental aspect of catching is the part of the position many fans overlook.

"You've got to study hitters, you've got to know scouting reports, you've got to know your pitching staff, and you've got to know the right pitch to call in the right situation," said three-time All-Star Brian McCann.

Brian McCann knows that catchers win some (below) and lose some (facing page) when it comes to plays at the plate, and it's the only position that begins each pitch in foul territory (inset).

"You know how much opposing players like to run, and what counts they like to run on."

During a game, catchers are called upon to think for pitchers, reminding them what pitches they've thrown to opposing hitters and what the result was the last time around. They also help move infielders and outfielders, based on the game situation.

"You have to call the game the right way," said Perez. "If you don't, the chance of losing is very high. To me, the catcher is the best position in baseball. You have to hit, run, throw, think, do everything for the whole team."

Backup catcher Corky Miller agrees: "Once I decided to be a catcher, it's all I wanted to do. Throwing guys out is awesome."

No matter how much time catchers spend on pre-game prep and in-game adjustments, however, there are some

aspects of catching they just can't ready themselves for. When rookie catcher Clint Sammons returned from a wrist injury in the minors a few years ago, his arm was tested in his first game back.

"The guy went to steal, and I didn't even get my throw to the mound - it just went straight into the ground," said Sammons. "We just happened to be on the road, so I caught a lot of ribbing from the fans on that one."

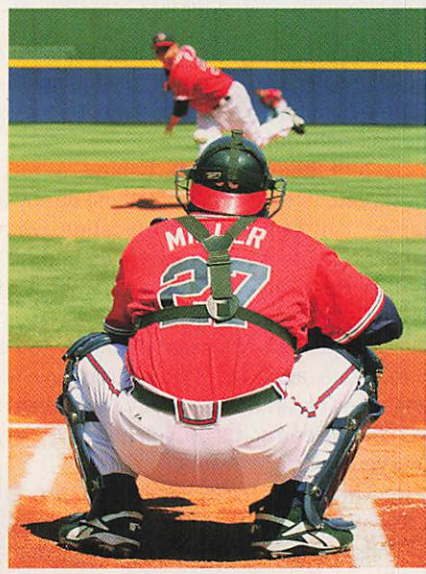
For catchers, injuries are a part of the game, which is why their protective equipment is so important to them. They wear 10 pounds of gear, including a helmet, face mask, chest protector and oversized mitt.

According to both Sammons and third-base coach Brian Snitker, a former catcher, shin guards are the biggest hassle, their straps often cutting the back of the legs, twisting and turning around the calves, and getting sweaty and ratty.

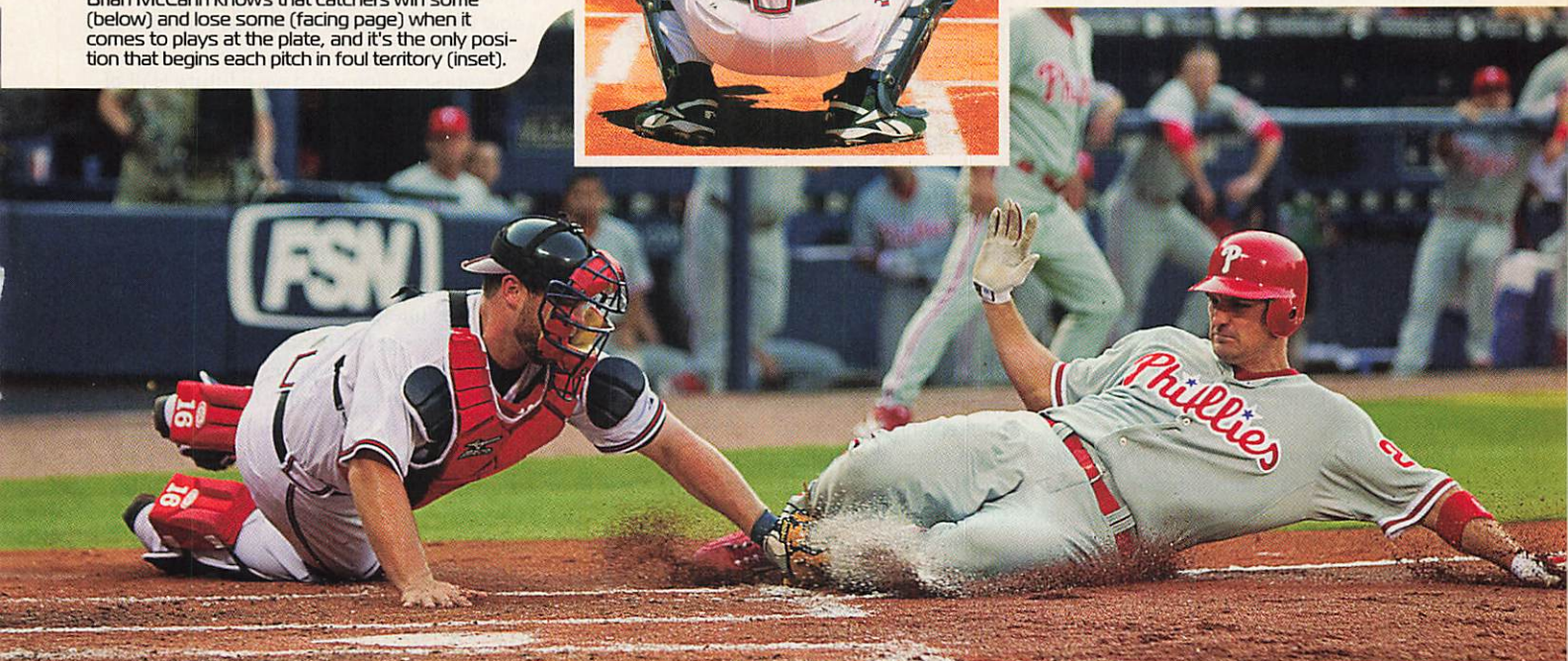
"They'll rub the back of your knees raw sometimes when it's hot," said Sammons. "That's the thing that always bothers me the most, putting those on every day."

Playing in stifling heat can be a daunting task at Turner Field on a mid-August Sunday afternoon. Catchers have to make sure to keep hydrated - they can lose five pounds of water weight on a hot day - so they can stay strong at the plate and in the field. But despite these factors, McCann says he'd

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



CARLOS RESTREPO



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The Braves' coaching staff includes three former catchers (L-R) Chino Cadahia, Eddie Perez and Brian Snitker. Clint Sammons (R) models the equipment that helps make catching such a unique position.



CARLOS RESTREPO



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

rather play on a 100-degree day than on a freezing cold night in March or October.

"On a 30-degree day, your hands are frozen," said McCann. "You catch a ball wrong, and it's going to sting your hands pretty bad."

Regardless of the weather, catchers have to cope with physical punishments ranging from wayward foul tips to marathon games to collisions at the plate, like the one that left McCann with a mild concussion July 27 (photo pg. 28). Sammons, a former high school state championship quarterback, says being involved in a home plate collision is tougher than being sacked by an oversized lineman.

"In football, you kind of get used to getting hit - it's just part of the game," said Sammons. "In baseball, it may happen a couple of times of year. So from that standpoint, it's tougher."

One of those collisions happened to Sammons in a Class A game. A throw was coming in from the right side, and when he turned to make the tag, he caught an elbow to the face, knocking him out for a second.

"Those aren't fun," said Sammons with a smile.

Foul tips flying off the bat at high speeds and odd angles are another hazard catchers must face. Aside from the obvious most-painful spot to get hit - the cup - what's the next worst place to get nicked? According to Snitker, it's the fingers.

"Your legs and everything, the fat parts, they sting and bruise, but when you get hit

in the fingers, things break," said Snitker. "I broke one finger from a foul tip, and another time I got hit on the finger and it popped the nail right out."

Despite being hidden behind a face mask, catchers do plenty of talking during a game, constantly communicating with pitchers, fielders - even umpires and hitters. In McCann's experience, banter with hitters is brief and to the point.

"Everyone's all business when they come to the plate, and I try not to distract anyone when they're hitting," said McCann. "Even if you see a friend come up, you just say, 'Hey, how you doing?'"

Conversations with umpires can be lengthier, but vary, depending on who's calling balls and strikes. According to Sammons, catchers and umpires actually work together - the ump wants to do the best job he can, and the catcher wants to help him while getting the most out of his pitcher.

"Sometimes it's five or six innings of just shooting the bull with an umpire if you've grown to like him," said Sammons. "Other times, it's simply asking him where a pitch is, trying to find his zone and helping a pitcher know where he's got the ball."

On other occasions, as Snitker found out, catcher-umpire conversations can veer in unexpected directions.

"One time when I was playing American Legion ball, I had to go to the bathroom real bad," said Snitker. "I told the umpire, 'I can't wait anymore,' and I just took off in the middle of the inning. I threw my chest protector

up in the air, and I was gone. By the time I came back, they had already replaced me."

When it comes to going out to the mound to communicate with a pitcher, Perez says that occasionally the chatter focuses on strategy and what pitch to throw, but the majority of the time, the meeting's purpose is to allow the pitcher to get refocused.

"Maybe the pitcher's lost, maybe he's thrown too many walks, maybe he's given up too many hits," said Perez. "Most of the time, the meetings are to give him time to regroup and start all over again. Pitchers know what they need to do, but you have to remind them."

Of course, when you have a future Hall of Famer such as Tom Glavine, John Smoltz or former Brave Greg Maddux on the mound, sometimes it's best just to get out of the way. During one game Perez was catching, Maddux loaded the bases with one out, and former Braves pitching coach Leo Mazzone came out to talk strategy.

"All the infielders got there, and Maddux said, 'Listen up, I'm gonna throw this pitch, it's going to you, Chipper, and then we'll turn the doubleplay, and then we'll get out of here,'" said Perez. "And that's exactly what happened - he threw a sinker... groundball to Chipper... doubleplay. Everybody was looking at each other, laughing at what happened."

Life is never dull for the men who wear the so-called "tools of ignorance" but who generally are tuned into the game more than any other player on the field.

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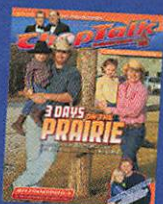
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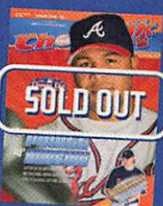
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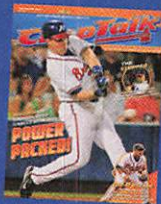
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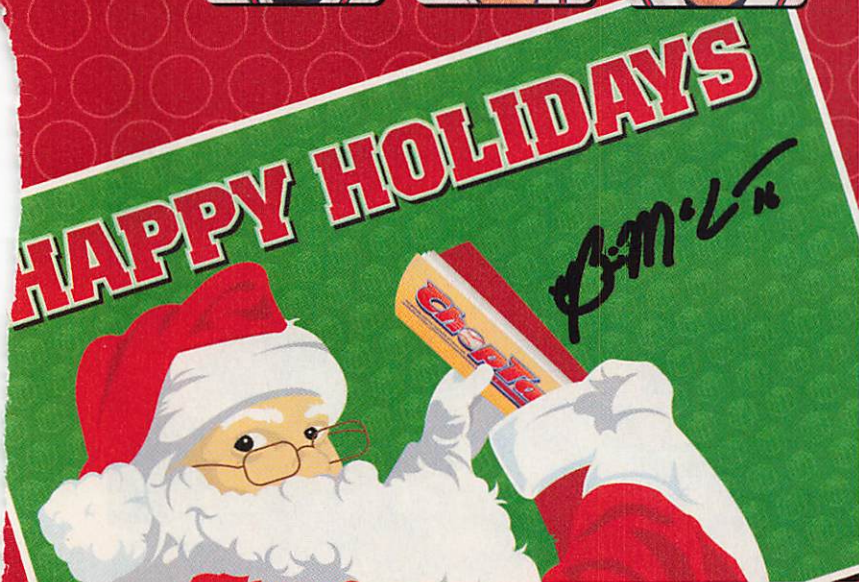
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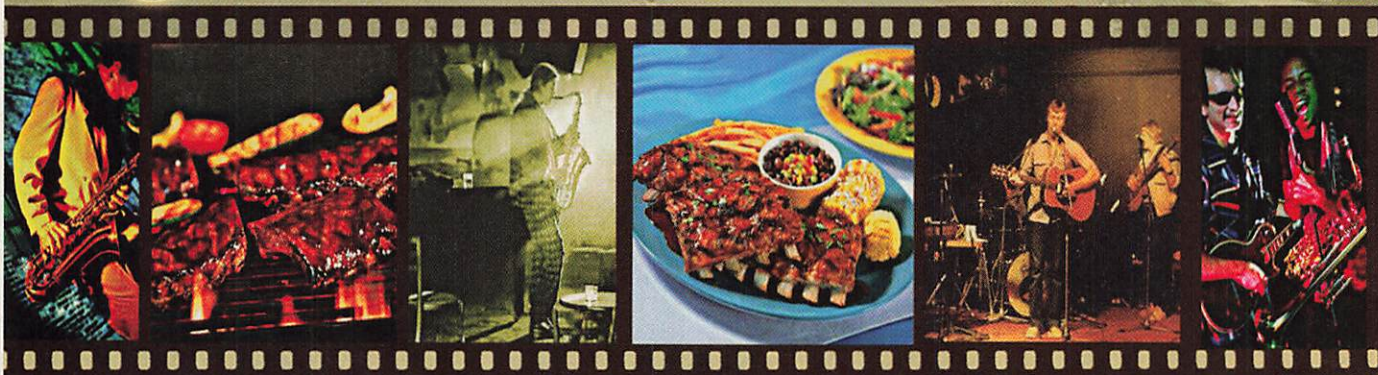
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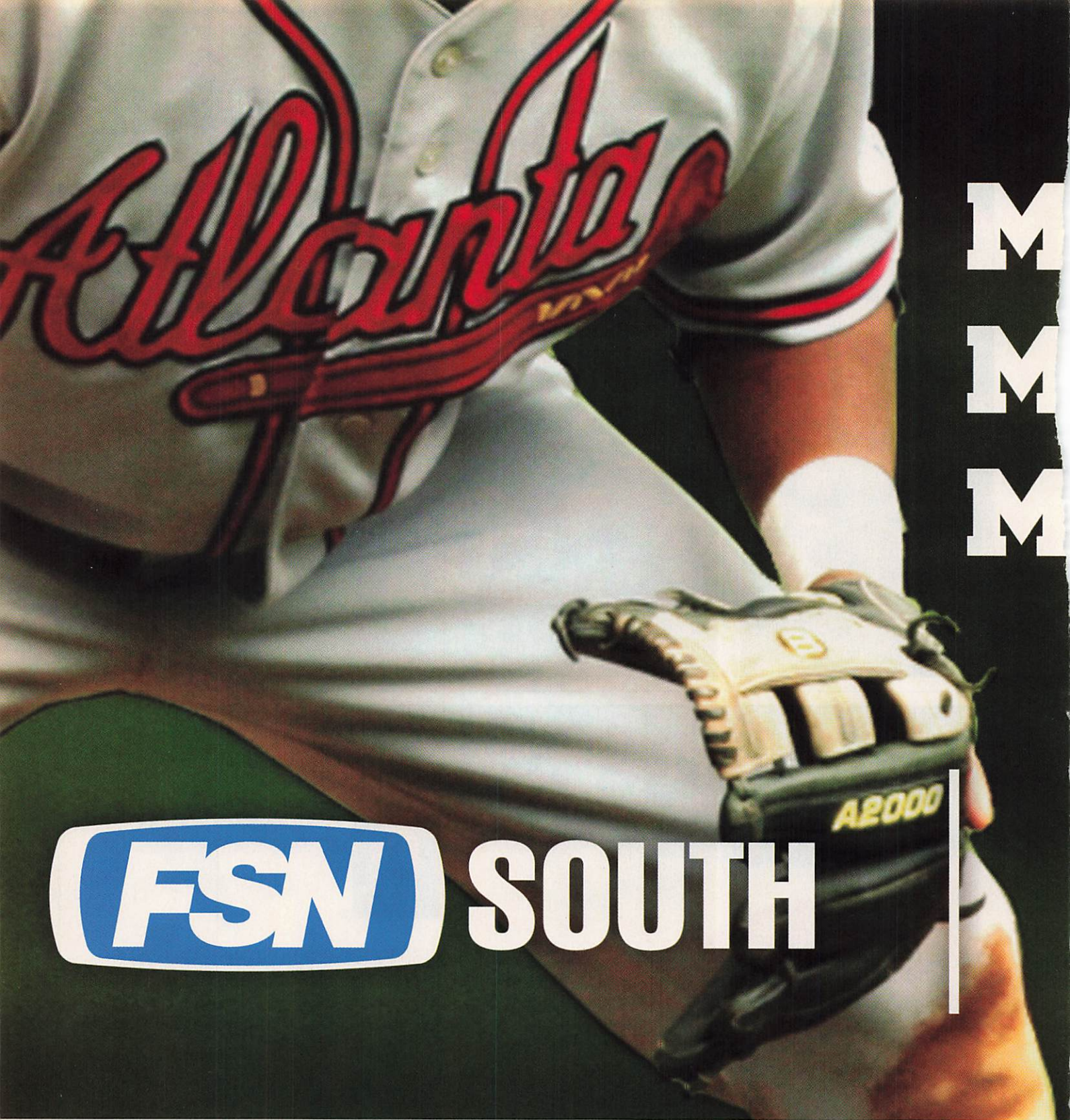
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*A Player To Count On, Whether At The Plate, In the Field,
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It's been said that getting to the top is hard, and staying there is even harder.

Chipper Jones hasn't had that problem.

A World Series champion, a league MVP and a three-time National League All-Star in his first five seasons, Jones was in rarified air as the '90s closed and the new millennium began... and he was just warming up.

"I was still learning," he recalled. "I was 28 years old coming into 2000 and really kind of coming into my prime and feeling like I could dominate a game with my bat, whether it was average or power. My legs felt good, I was running well, I was stealing bases, and I was playing good defense. It was time to continue being an MVP-type player, year in and year out."

Jones personified the Braves, who year in and year out went about the business of dominating the National League East. With eight division titles already under its belt, Atlanta won by one and two games in 2000 and 2001, before running away with crowns by 19 games in 2002 and 10 games in both 2003 and 2004, and settling for a two-game advantage in 2005.

Chipper may not have always been the center of attention, but he was an invaluable piece of the puzzle. From 2000 through 2003, he was the model of consistency - averaging .318 at the plate over the four-year period with 35 homers and 105 RBIs in 156.5 games.

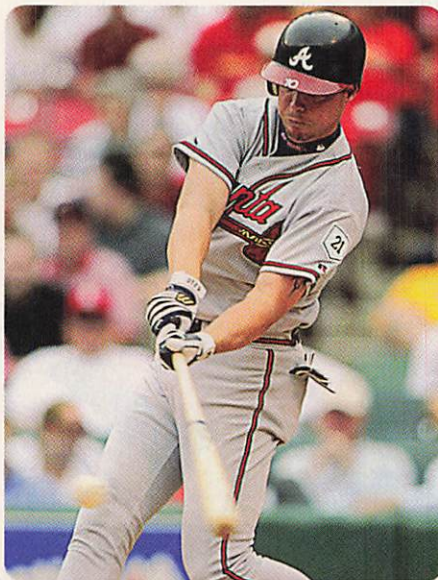
With that consistency came his quiet assault on the Atlanta section of the Braves' record book as well as those of Major League Baseball.

On July 24, 2003, against Florida, Chipper's fifth-inning RBI single moved him past Hank Aaron and into second place in the Atlanta records behind Dale Murphy, whose franchise RBI record eventually fell on June 10, 2006, at Houston.

Chipper's 106 RBIs in '03 earned him a place in history as only the fourth major leaguer to drive in 100 runs in eight consecutive seasons - tying Willie Mays (1959-66) and Mel Ott (1929-36), one behind Sammy Sosa (1995-2003).

Joining the company of greats such as Mays, Ott, Aaron, Murphy and Eddie Mathews became commonplace. Heading into 2008, Chipper was first or second in Atlanta annals in almost every hitting category.

"I've been here a long time. Not too many guys have been with the Atlanta Braves for 15 years. The ones that have are pitchers,"



With power and consistency at the plate, combined with a sustained career as a Brave, Chipper worked his way to the top of the Atlanta records in most major hitting departments, often climbing over legendary names like Hank Aaron, Eddie Mathews and Dale Murphy.



he said with a laugh. "I would hope that I'm up there among the top in those categories. But to be mentioned with the names that I'm mentioned with, whether it be Dale Murphy or Eddie Mathews or the great Hank Aaron, it's awfully, awfully flattering, awe-inspiring to be with those guys, because I continue to look up to Dale and Hank, and when Eddie was alive, I loved chatting with him."

While Jones was not always the talk of the town for his numbers, his consistency contributed to a dynasty that was more closely identified with pitching excellence.

So workmanlike was he that he was frequently said to be indifferent or lacking intensity - a label the team would also bear following their playoff disappointments.

Jones very strongly disagrees with the assessment.

"Lacking in intensity, never. I get severely ticked if someone says, 'lacking in intensity,'" he said. "Maybe lacking emotion sometimes. I can live with that, but that's just me. I perform better on an even keel. I get too high, too emotional, then I don't play the game well. It takes a mature player to know at what level he plays best."

"This game, if you're in the clouds, it has a way of kicking you in the toe and bringing you back down," he continued. "It's a weird game. It's a marathon, it's not a sprint, and I feel more confident on an even keel."

But he admits he's occasionally had a hard time keeping that even keel.

At the 2000 All-Star Game, held at Turner Field, Chipper went 3-for-3 in front of the home crowd and hit the game's only homer in the third inning.

"One of the best nights in my career," he said, smiling broadly in recollection. "You really only get one shot to play an All-Star Game in your home field, if you ever get one, and to go out there and make the most of my three opportunities, hit a home run in front of the home crowd, it was one of those nights where you walk out to your car and drive home with your chest puffed up a little farther than usual."

There also was Game 1 of the 2001 NLDS in Houston, when he came up in the eighth with the Braves down, 3-2, and crushed the first pitch from Billy Wagner into the left-field seats for a three-run homer to give Atlanta a 6-3 lead and change the course of the entire series.

"The chips were down. I had to come

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHIPPER THROUGH THE YEARS

through in that situation," he said. "It was against a guy I knew was going to come right at me, who had pretty much owned me throughout my career. They brought him in in the eighth inning instead of the ninth just to get me out, and that was probably the at-bat of the whole series. I think that was one of the at-bats during my career that really took me to the next level in other people's eyes."

Holding that even keel occasionally was tough during the not-so-good times, too. When he grounded into an unusual 3-6 doubleplay to end the 2002 Division Series against San Francisco, the emotionally spent Jones, still in full uniform, sat, head in hands, in the tunnel leading to the clubhouse.

"I didn't come through," he stated matter-of-factly. "You play 200 games during the course of the season to get to that point, and you've got who I think is our best hitter up at the plate and I didn't come through. That one stuck with me for a while."

But most of the time, that emotional side remained hidden, as did Jones' behind-the-scenes leadership. He's been unselfish to help keep the team competitive, whether it meant deferring his position as he did in 2002 when he agreed to move to the outfield, or part of his salary as he did prior to 2005, when he helped free money for the Braves to re-sign Tim Hudson.

"I want to win more than anything here, with this club," he said. "When the Braves came to me and said we could get Vinny Castilla but that would entail me playing the outfield, I said, 'Fine, Vinny's going to make us a better ballclub. I can play the outfield. I've done it before.' It just seemed like the right move at that particular time."

He admitted, however, that the move to the outfield is one of the few regrets of his career.

"If I had it to do over again, would I do it? No," he said. "I was out of my element in left field. I was out of my comfort zone and never really was happy out there. I always yearned to get back to third base, but I've done my share of sacrificing."

Playing left field, which he did from 2002 through part of 2004, proved to be the ultimate sacrifice. The pounding his legs took led to injuries, including a hamstring injury in '04, which put him on the disabled list for the first time since 1996 and began a string of injuries that forced him to the DL every season thereafter.

Finally, on June 15, 2004, Chipper returned to third base, a position he would not leave again, and he responded, hitting

.356 during the second half and tying a franchise record by homering in five consecutive games (Aug. 13-17), including his first multi-homer game in over a year.

Defensively, he also began to play a sharper third base - in 2005, he committed a career-low five errors with a career-best .980 fielding percentage.

That 2005 season was also among the most rewarding for Chipper from a team perspective. While he played a career-low 109 games, thanks to injuries, Jones still



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

A team player in all respects, Chipper gave up third base for left field in 2002 so the Braves could sign Vinny Castilla, and sacrificed some salary in 2005 so Tim Hudson could be re-signed.



ALLSPORT/TOM HALICK

hit .296, including .397 in close-and-late situations, and batted .321 over his final 52 starts, hitting safely in 37 of those games.

Forced by injuries to go deep into their minor league system, the Braves brought up 12 players for their big league debuts, including Brian McCann, Jeff Francoeur, then-outfielder Kelly Johnson and pitchers Blaine Boyer, Chuck James, Blaine Boyer, Kyle Davies and Joey Devine.

On Sept. 27, the Braves trounced the Rockies, 12-3, at Turner Field, clinching their 14th consecutive division title. The

team celebrated on the field with the fans in the stands. During the celebration, Jones and Smoltz had a priceless moment when they raised a 2005 NL East Champs banner.

"It was something that John and I really cherished," Jones said. "We are the leaders of this ballclub. For us to win that and embrace on the field and be able to grab some appreciation from the fans, holding that banner up, let them know how much we appreciate them, was something I won't forget."

The Braves have been unable to recapture that division banner that once seemed would always be theirs, and while those division flags may have been taken for granted by some, they weren't by Chipper, who has worked hard and hit more consistently than ever.

In 2006, Jones had his first three-homer game on Aug. 14 against Washington. He also hit his 351st career home run on Aug. 26, passing Chili Davis and moving into third place all-time among switch-hitters (trails only Hall of Famers Mickey Mantle and Eddie Murray), and matched a record set in 1927 by Pittsburgh's Paul Waner by posting extra-base hits in 14 consecutive games (June 26 through July 16). This was despite three separate trips to the DL and playing in only 110 games.

He answered the question of what he could do if he could only stay healthy in 2007. Playing in 134 games, the most since 2004, and recording 513 at-bats, the most since 2003, Jones scored 100 runs for the eighth time in his career, drove in 100 runs for the ninth time (the first since '03), hit a career-high 42 doubles, recorded his 2,000th hit, and passed Dale Murphy for Atlanta Braves all-time homers, when he hit No. 372, his second of the game July 5 at Dodger Stadium.

He also nearly won his first batting title. Sparked by the acquisition of Mark Teixeira, Jones hit .345 during the season's second half, including a blistering .375 in September and October, taking eventual champion, Colorado's Matt Holliday, down to the wire.

But his career-best .337 average fell three points short of Holliday.

The valiant effort caught national attention, however, and proved that reports of Chipper's demise had indeed been premature.

Jones would continue his renaissance and chase history in 2008, now no longer an aged hitter, but a hitter for the ages.

**NEXT MONTH:
CHASING THE BATTING TITLE**

HOME RUN DECLINE OF EPIC PROPORTION



Brian McCann had 23 home runs at press time, one shy of his career high, but overall home run production ranked lowest in the NL since the Braves moved to Atlanta in 1966.

BY STEVE FALL

THE BRAVES have excelled at getting runners on base this season. Only two National League teams had a higher on-base percentage than their .342 figure (through Sept. 1). But getting those runners home has been a different story. The team ranked ninth with 623 runs scored.

Bobby Cox's club had stranded more baserunners (1,070) than every team except the Cardinals (1,080).

Since the Braves had a solid batting average with runners on base (.271) and in scoring position (.269), they delivered their share of timely hits.

So, why have they scored so few runs despite getting men on base? The main reason has been a lack of power.

The Braves are headed for their lowest National League ranking in home runs since coming to Atlanta in 1966. Through Sept. 1, they placed 13th in the NL with 116 homers. Since the league expanded to 16 teams in 1998, the Braves have never finished below 10th in homers. This club will likely top only three others in home runs. That hasn't happened since 1988, when Atlanta's 96 home runs ranked ninth among 12 clubs.

The Braves appeared unlikely to reach 150 home runs this season. That hasn't occurred – aside from strike-shortened 1994 – since 1992. Atlanta hit 138 homers that year en route to the NL pennant. That figure, which came before baseball's offen-

sive explosion, led the league.

This year, the Braves failed to hit a homer in 62 of their first 138 games – four more homerless games than all of last season. They were 17-45 (.274) in those games, versus 42-34 (.553) when they homered at least once.

Just two seasons ago, Atlanta pounded an NL-best 222 homers. That figure fell to 176 in 2007. In 2006, five Braves hit 20 or more homers. Only Brian McCann and Chipper Jones reached that level in '08. Andruw Jones (41 HR in 2006) and Adam LaRoche (32) have since left the team. Jeff Francoeur has gone from 29 home runs in 2006 to just 11 this year.

To turn things around next season, the Braves must find a power source against lefthanders. They ranked last in the NL with 27 homers against southpaws, down from 61 in 2007. Mark Teixeira, who last played for Atlanta in late July, still led the team with seven home runs against lefties. Chipper Jones was next with four.

While starting pitching was the main reason behind the Braves' run of 14 straight division titles, power hitting also played a huge role. From 1991 through 2005, the team cleared the fence 2,650 times. That led every other NL club by a wide margin. The Cubs came next with 2,572. Atlanta led the league in home runs five times during that run (1992-94, 2003, 2006).

With 77 runs batted in through Sept. 1, Brian McCann had a shot at his third 90-RBI season. Just two other catchers – Hall of Famer Johnny Bench and Ted Simmons – made it to that figure three times through their age-24 seasons.

McCann also owned a .906 on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS) in 2008. Among previous Braves catchers with enough at-bats to qualify for the batting title, only Joe Torre (.943 in 1966) had a .900 OPS. Just six 24-year-old catchers in history have had .900 OPS figures: Rudy York (.995), Fred Carroll (.970), Mike Piazza (.932), Bench (.920), Carlton Fisk (.909), and Mickey Cochrane (.904). Those last three players are in the Hall of Fame. Piazza should join them as soon as he becomes eligible.

Martin Prado put together a torrid August, batting .432 with nine doubles, two triples, and a homer. In 166 plate appearances this season through Sept. 1, he had 20 extrabase hits. Just 10 other players have had that many extrabase hits in seasons with less than 175 plate appearances. Among them, only three also had batting average's comparable to Prado's .338: Todd Hollandsworth (2001, 22 extrabase hits, .368 BA), Brian Giles (1996, 20, .355), and Rico Brogna (1994, 20, .351).

While Chipper Jones' batting average drew more attention, his power produced his most amazing feat this year. He posted his 14th consecutive season with 20 home runs. Without considering his three at-bats in 1993 as a "season," Jones became just the second major leaguer to start his career with 14 straight 20-homer seasons.

During baseball's long history, nobody besides two great Braves third basemen has ever done this. Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews hit 20 each year from 1952 through 1965.

Even at any career stage, only a short list of the game's best sluggers managed 14 straight 20-home run seasons. Hank Aaron leads with 20, followed by Babe Ruth (16), Willie Mays (15), Barry Bonds (15), Mike Schmidt (14), Rafael Palmeiro (14) and Manny Ramirez (14). Ramirez and Jones have the only active streaks.

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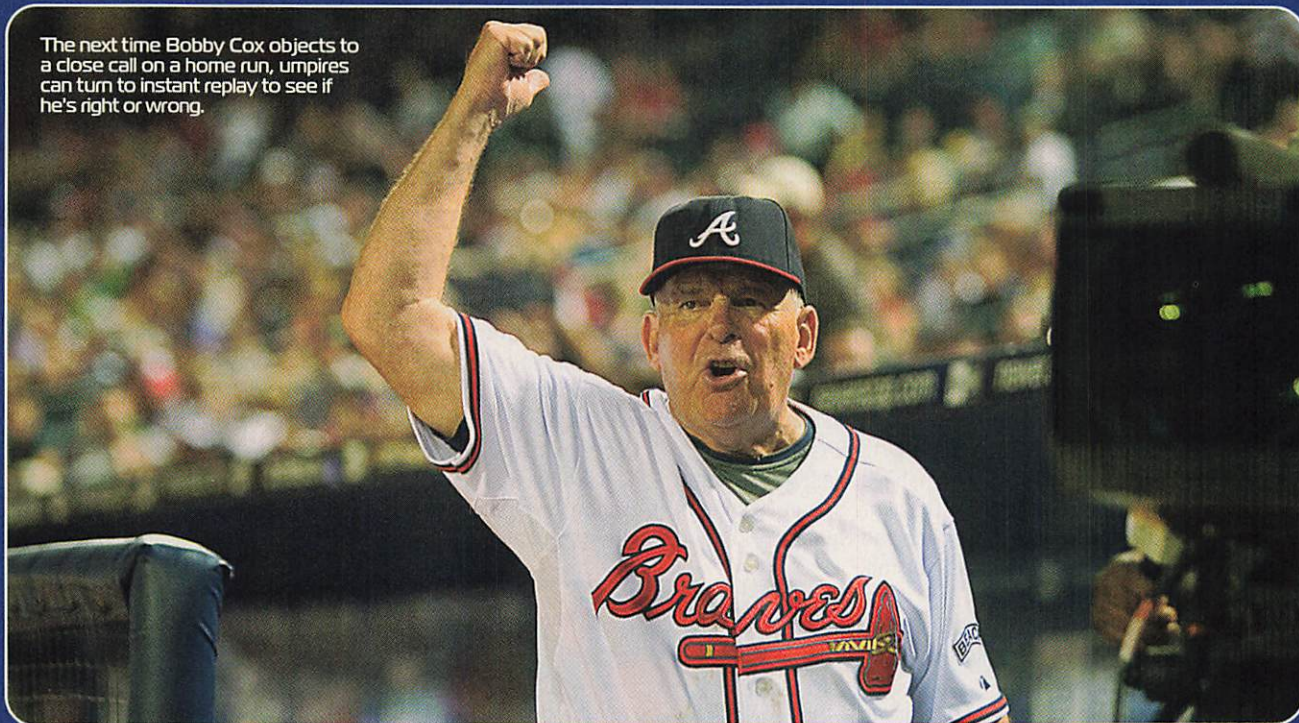
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Where baseball
is always on

The next time Bobby Cox objects to a close call on a home run, umpires can turn to instant replay to see if he's right or wrong.



UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Cox, Glavine Like New Instant Replay System To Assess Disputed Home Run Calls

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

While Bobby Cox has obviously had his share of disputes with umpires, he's never lobbied for Major League Baseball to begin using instant replay to review disputed calls.

After Commissioner Bud Selig's announcement Aug. 26 that replay will be used to review disputed home run calls, Cox provided his approval. At the same time, he reiterated that he was happy that this system won't be used for any other sort of call made by umpires.

"Anything else, I would never agree with, like plays at second base, [plays at] first [base] and controversial catches," Cox said. "That should all be up to the umpires."

Beginning Aug. 28, MLB started utilizing the new replay system. All televised games are monitored and staffed by an expert technician and either an umpire supervisor or a former umpire at Major League Baseball Advanced Media headquarters in New York. If the crew chief determines that a call should be reviewed, he contacts the MLB.com technician. The technician provides all appropriate feeds to the crew chief, who is viewing a monitor located at the stadium where he's working.

The monitor at Turner Field is located near the umpire's room, which is located on the third-base side.

"If used and done the way they are expecting, and there aren't any long delays that make the games significantly longer, then I'm all for it," said Tom Glavine. "I'm all for doing things right."

The first Braves game subject to instant replay review was Aug. 29 when Atlanta began a three-game series at Washington. However, at press time, it had yet to come into play during a

Braves game.

"I think they really want this for the playoffs and the World Series," said veteran umpire Derryl Cousins, who was working at Turner Field when the system was approved by MLB. "There's nothing wrong with having to reverse a call if a home run is [initially] called wrong."

Looking back on his career, which has included a Major League-record 142 ejections, Cox could only remember two instances where this replay system might have been beneficial. There was one game in San Francisco at old Candlestick Park, which had a clear outfield wall, when television replays showed umpires should have ruled that Steve Avery homered, instead of giving him a ground-rule double.

The other instance came during the 2005 season, when Brian Jordan was denied a homer that appeared to hit the left-field foul pole. He was initially given a homer, before the umpires reversed their decision and prompted Cox to earn one of his many ejections.

During his career that's spanned 305 career wins, Glavine doesn't believe he would have been affected by this replay rule.

"I can think of two instances where replay would have made a difference, and I wasn't involved in either one," Glavine said. "One was during the Yankees-Mets game earlier this year, and the other one was when that fan [Jeffrey Maier] reached over the wall during the [1996] playoff game at Yankee Stadium."

"In the end, I think we are doing this to make sure the right call is made. I hope if and when it's utilized, it has a very minimal effect on interrupting the games."



MISSISSIPPI WINS SOUTHERN TITLE; MYRTLE BEACH BEATEN IN FINALS



THE MYRTLE BEACH PELICANS and Mississippi Braves followed different paths during the 2008 season, but both wound up with very impressive results.

Absorbing frequent roster moves and sometimes even utilizing some of the same players, Myrtle Beach reached the championship round of the Carolina League (CL), and Mississippi did the same in the Southern League (SL). Myrtle Beach lost in four games to Potomac in the CL championship series. As this issue was going to press, Mississippi beat Carolina, 3-2, in 10 innings in the fifth game of their series to win the Southern League Championship. See next month's ChopTalk for more information.

Myrtle Beach finished first in the Southern Division in both halves of the advanced Class-A CL season.

Mississippi, on the other hand, had to overcome a 2-15 start - the worst in Double A - to win the second half in the South Division of the SL and qualify for the playoffs.

Myrtle Beach reached the CL championship round by winning three of four games in the best-of-five series against Winston-Salem. Mississippi swept three straight games from Birmingham to reach the SL championship.

The dominating Pelicans posted the best regular season record in the minors (89-51, .636) by making use of a prospect-laden roster that landed five players, as well as manager Rocket Wheeler, on the league's year-end all-star team.

Catcher Tyler Flowers capped his outstanding season with multi-hit efforts in all four games of the first round of the playoffs during which he hit .529 with two home runs and five RBIs. Third baseman Eric Campbell had six hits and five runs scored in the series, outfielder Concepcion Rodriguez went 8-

for-17 (.471), and first baseman Ernesto Mejia had seven RBIs.

"The thing that really impressed me about this team was that it was everybody stepping up when they were needed," Wheeler said. "It wasn't one guy carrying the entire team. Everybody has contributed and helped out. These kids played well together, they played very hard, and that put them in position to win a ring, which was our goal since Day 1."

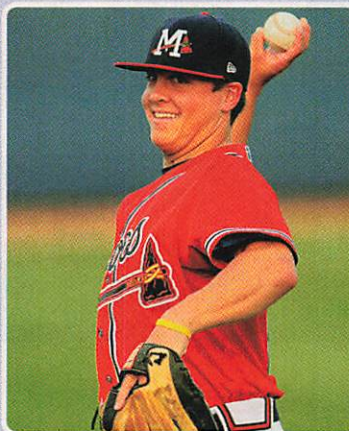
"I know everyone talks about development at the minor league level, but winning can be important, too, especially when you have the chance to play in [post-season] games that mean something."

Pitching, the key to Mississippi's reversal of fortunes, continued to serve as the catalyst in the post-season for manager Phillip Wellman's club. In the divisional series, Kris Medlen tossed a five-hit shutout and struck out a career-high 12 in the finale, while Tommy Hanson allowed only two runs over seven innings in Game 2, and SL Pitcher of the Year Todd Redmond won Game 1. In 29 playoff innings, the Mississippi pitchers surrendered only two earned runs for a paltry 0.62 ERA.

The hitters, meanwhile, did their part, too. In the deciding game of the divisional championship, Jordan Schafer drove in Matt Young with a sacrifice fly in the 11th inning to give the M-Braves a 3-2 decision.

"These guys are the most resilient players I have managed," Wellman said. "These guys

did it and made me and the coaching staff look good. I couldn't be happier for them. I've said every day for the past few weeks that this is a true testament to what happens when you keep your nose to the grindstone and come to the ballpark ready to work every day. Ours wasn't a team full of prospects. It's a bunch of blue-collar workers who refused to quit."



TOM PRIDDY

Kris Medlen pitched a 5-hit shutout to send Mississippi into the Southern League's championship series.

ARIZONA FALL LEAGUE

THE BRAVES are sending seven players and Myrtle Beach manager Rocket Wheeler to participate in the Arizona Fall League for the Mesa Solar Sox. Wheeler and six of the players played until mid-September in either the Carolina or Southern league playoffs, while the seventh, outfielder Brandon Jones, was on the Atlanta roster.

In addition to Wheeler and Jones, the Braves are providing extra exposure to pitch-

ers Deunte Heath, Tommy Hanson, Stephen Marek and Kris Medlen, catcher Tyler Flowers and third baseman Van Pope. All four of the pitchers, as well as Pope, played at Double-A Mississippi this year, and Flowers had an MVP-caliber season at Myrtle Beach.

The AFL serves as an ideal time for players to work on certain aspects of the game. All four of the pitchers will be trying to fine-tune their secondary pitches. Heath, for example,

has one of the best fastballs in the organization, but needs to become more consistent with his breaking ball and changeup.

Flowers will continue to work on his mechanics behind the plate. Pope will have the chance to get some additional at-bats while improving plate discipline and ability to drive the ball to the opposite field. The Braves are looking for Jones to polish all aspects of his game so that he might be a



TODD REDMOND

FALL
INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE
ROSTER

PITCHERS

BRETT BUTTS
YELIAR CASTRO
PAUL CLEMENS
KYLE COFIELD
ERIK CORDIER
DIMASTHER DELGADO
RANDALL DELGADO
BRETT DEVAL
ROSS FRANCIS
J.J. HOOVER
CRAIG KIMBREL
JEFF LOCKE
MICHAEL MEHLICH
BENINO PRUNEDA
RYNE REYNOSO
SANTOS RODRIGUEZ
COLE ROHRBOUGH
ZEKE SPRUILL
TYLER STOVALL
RICHARD SULLIVAN
JULIO TEHERAN
JACOB THOMPSON

CATCHERS

CHRISTIAN BETHANCOURT
PHILLIP BRITTON
MATT KENNELLY
BRAEDEN SCHLEHUBER
JESUS SUCRE

INFELDERS

ROBERT BROOKS
VICTOR CADETTE
FREDDIE FREEMAN
JON GILMORE
JAKE HANSON
BRANDON HICKS
TRAVIS JONES
DONELL LINARES
ERNESTO MEJIA

OUTFIELDERS

DAVID BERRES
WILLIE CABRERA
GORKYS HERNANDEZ
JASON HEYWARD
CODY JOHNSON
JON-MARK OWINGS
CONCEPCION RODRIGUEZ
LUIS SUMOZA

strong contender for regular playing time in Atlanta next season.



RICHMOND
TRIPLE A

THE R-BRAVES concluded their final season in Richmond with a 63-78 record, which tied Charlotte for third place in the International League's South Division.

James Parr put together an outstanding August, including International League Pitcher of the Week honors for Aug. 18-24, prior to his promotion to Atlanta. Parr won both of his decisions during that week, working 12 shutout innings.

The R-Braves swept the league's individual honors for Aug. 18-24. Catcher **Corky Miller** was named Player of the Week. Miller, who spent the season's first four months in the major leagues, received the award after going 10-for-18 with two doubles and three

I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED
FOR A BETTER SEASON

PLAYERS DON'T OFTEN have a chance to say this, but I feel this year was a great season. I started off getting traded from the Pirates' organization during spring training and wound up pitching well at the Double-A level and being part of a winning team in Mississippi.

Much of it was unexpected, but the way everything turned out, I couldn't have asked for anything better.

I remember finding out I had been traded to the Braves. It was definitely a shocker. When I found out I would be going to the Braves, my agent told me it was going to be a great opportunity. Atlanta has been a great organization for a long time, and it didn't take long to discover how right he was.

They welcomed me with open arms, and the coaches did anything and everything they could for me. The players treated me like one of the guys, and I made a lot of friends real quick. I played against several of the guys last year (in the Carolina League). The transition really could not have been easier.

On the mound, Bo (Mississippi pitching coach Derek Botelho) moved me back to the left-hand side of the rubber. That helped me from a mechanical standpoint.

I also gained the confidence this year in throwing all of my pitches at any time in the count. By throwing strikes early in the count, I was able to get ahead of the hitters and make them hit my pitch. That was huge, especially in terms of getting off to a decent start in the Southern League.

As a team, we started off so bad. Everybody was down a little bit, but we never gave up. Things started to turn around a little bit once we got some new starting pitchers in, guys like Tommy (Hanson) and Deunte (Heath). They did a great job, and then our hitters started turning things around.

Pretty soon, we decided as a team that we were going to do everything we could to make the playoffs. To achieve that goal after our slow start was just a tremendous feeling.

I can't say enough about our coaching staff. Bo is incredible with the way he works with the pitchers, and Stubby (hitting coach Franklin Stubbs) is the same with the hitters.

Our manager, Phillip Wellman, is 100 percent behind his players. He will do anything he can for his players. He's an easy-going guy who really knows his baseball. He also knows when to put a charge into his guys and how to keep things positive, even when things were going bad at the start of the year. He's the best manager I've ever played for.

Being named Southern League Pitcher of the Year is a great honor. I was surprised because there are so many good pitchers in this league who definitely deserved the award. I was shocked when I heard the news, but it is definitely one of the biggest highlights in my career thus far.

I entered this season simply hoping to have a good year while turning some things around. I wound up joining a great organization and being part of a championship-caliber club while pitching as well as I have in my career. It's been a wonderful year, and I can't complain one bit.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Todd Redmond was named the Most Outstanding Pitcher in the Southern League by vote of media members who cover the league. Redmond is a 23-year-old righthander who was acquired from Pittsburgh at the end of spring training in a trade for Tyler Yates. He was 13-5 with a 3.52 ERA, setting Mississippi Braves records for wins (13), strikeouts (133) and innings (166 1/3). The 6-3, 185-pounder is a native of St. Petersburg, Fla., who was a 39th-round pick by Pittsburgh in the 2004 draft.

BEING NAMED SOUTHERN
LEAGUE PITCHER OF
THE YEAR IS A GREAT HONOR...
I WAS SHOCKED WHEN
I HEARD THE NEWS

home runs. He returned to Atlanta when rosters were expanded in September...

Centerfielder **Josh Anderson** concluded a strong first season in the Atlanta organization by ranking third in the IL with 155 hits, fourth with a .314 batting average, and fifth with 42 stolen bases. First baseman/designated hitter **Barbaro Canizares** tied for fourth in IL with 151 hits...

Scott Thorman returned to the Richmond for the final six games of the regular season after playing with Canada in the Olympic Games in Beijing. Thorman hit safely in all six games and concluded the season with a 10-game hitting streak...

Jorge Julio was dominant in August with Richmond. The righthander, who signed with the Braves on June 13 after being released by Cleveland, did not allow an earned run and recorded nine saves in 16 games during the month. Julio surrendered only eight hits and struck out 25 in 17 1/3 innings...



MISSISSIPPI

DOUBLE A

THE M-BRAVES established a team record for most wins in a season by going 73-66...

First baseman **Kala Ka'aihue** led the SL with 88 walks, eighth in the minors. Kala also was second in the SL with a .417 on-base percentage. Outfielder **Matt Young** tied for first in the league with 11 triples and was fifth with 30 stolen bases...

Todd Redmond and teammate **Kris Medlen**, who made an impressive move from the bullpen to the rotation in June, tied for fifth in the league with a 3.52 ERA. **Luis Valdez** tied for second in the SL with 28 saves and ranked fourth with 55 appearances. Valdez's saves total easily topped the Atlanta farm system by more than doubling the totals of second-place **Bryan Dumesnil** and **Kevin Gunderson**, who had 13 saves each...

Tommy Hanson paced the minor leagues by limiting opposing batters to a .175 average and ranked second by averaging 10.6 strikeouts per nine innings. After working through a rough stretch shortly after being promoted from Myrtle Beach during the first third of the season, Hanson dominated the Southern League by allowing only 70 hits in 98 innings and striking out 114.



MYRTLE BEACH

ADVANCED A

THE PELICANS established an atten-

dance record by attracting 242,397 fans, eclipsing the previous mark of 234,020 established in the franchise's second year, in 2000...

Outfielder **Willie Cabrera** was named the Pelicans' MVP. Cabrera batted .290 with 16 home runs as the team's No.-2 hitter and ranked second in the league with 86 runs and fourth with 51 extra-base hits...

Kyle Cofield was selected the Carolina League Pitcher of the Week for Aug. 18-24 after he allowed one hit and no walks over six shutout innings versus Wilmington on Aug. 24. Cofield wound up having an excellent season despite an average of 5.1 walks per nine innings. The Braves' eighth-round

YEAR-END HONORS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE

(MISSISSIPPI)

**ALL-STAR/
MOST OUTSTANDING PITCHER**
TODD REDMOND, RHP

CAROLINA LEAGUE

(MYRTLE BEACH)

ALL-STAR
TYLER FLOWERS, C
TRAVIS JONES, 2B
BRANDON HICKS, SS
GORKYS HERNANDEZ, CF
ERNESTO MEJIA, DH

MANAGER OF THE YEAR
ROCKET WHEELER

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE

(ROME)

ALL-STAR
FREDDIE FREEMAN, 1B
JASON HEYWARD, RF
**MOST OUTSTANDING
MAJOR LEAGUE PROSPECT**
JASON HEYWARD, RF

**GENERAL MANAGER
OF THE YEAR**
MIKE DUNN

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE

(DANVILLE)

ALL-STAR
JON GILMORE, 3B

pick in 2005 placed second in the CL with a 3.26 ERA...

Three other Myrtle Beach pitchers placed among the league leaders. Lefthander **Scott Diamond**, who signed in July 2007 as a non-drafted free agent, tied for the CL lead with 12 wins and paced the Atlanta organization with 15 wins after opening the season with three victories at Rome. **Ryne Reynoso** built on his all-star selection at mid-season to finish fourth with a 3.36 ERA, while **Bryan Dumesnil** was fourth in the league with 12 saves...

Ernesto Mejia paced the minor leagues with 47 doubles and ranked second with 73 extra-base hits. Mejia led the CL in homers

(21), RBIs (93) and runs (93) and placed third with 142 hits and fourth with a .505 slugging percentage...

The Pelicans had several other strong individual performances, with third baseman **Eric Campbell** and shortstop **Brandon Hicks** tying for fourth in the league with 18 home runs. Catcher **Tyler Flowers** led the league with 98 walks, the second-highest total in the minors, and placed second in the league with a .427 on-base percentage, fourth with 88 RBIs and fifth with a .494 slugging percentage...

Craig Kimbrel made a rapid ascent, starting at Danville, passing through Rome, and finishing at Myrtle Beach. Along the way, the third-round pick from Wallace State Community College saved 10 games while allowing only two earned runs and 16 hits in 35 1/3 innings. He struck out 56 of the 143 batters he faced (39 percent).



ROME

CLASS A

FIRST BASEMAN **Freddie Freeman** and rightfielder **Jason Heyward** shared the Rome Player of the Year award. Freeman, Atlanta's second-round draft pick in 2007, placed second in the SAL with a .521 slugging percentage, fourth with 155 hits, 95 RBIs and 58 extra-base hits, and fifth with a .316 batting average. Heyward, the Braves' first-round selection in 2007 and the 14th overall pick, ranked third in batting average (.323), fourth with a .388 on-base percentage, and fifth with 88 runs scored...

Lefthander **Edgar Osuna** was named Rome's Pitcher of the Year after placing ninth in the SAL with a 3.38 ERA. Osuna, who also paced the team with 10 wins and 135 strikeouts, possesses one of the best changeups in baseball...

Leftfielder **Cody Johnson** had an outstanding second half by hitting .296. The Braves' first-round draft pick from 2006 shortened his strikeouts, yet still finished second in the minors with 177. Johnson ranked second in the SAL with a franchise-record 26 home runs and fifth with 89 RBIs. Seventeen of Johnson's home runs came after the all-star break...

Outfielder **Chris Shehan** hit safely in all four games he played with Rome at the end of the season after batting .277 with five homers and 22 RBIs at Danville...

Jacob Thompson allowed three hits and a run over five innings in his lone start at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

FARM STATISTICS



RICHMOND

63-78

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | THE DIAMOND (804) 359-4444

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.314	121	494	77	155	25	4	4	40	30	57	42
Arnold, Derrick (2B/SS)	.248	48	149	9	37	7	0	1	10	5	35	5
Borchard, Joe (OF)	.274	33	117	16	32	5	2	4	12	13	29	3
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.300	134	504	56	151	28	0	13	67	43	69	1
Cruz, Enrique (INF)	.213	72	230	13	49	14	0	3	23	11	59	0
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.288	120	459	46	132	23	3	5	53	20	73	7
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.215	26	79	11	17	1	0	0	7	14	21	7
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.260	95	346	44	90	24	1	8	52	46	76	9
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.229	30	109	13	25	9	0	1	9	5	24	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.220	90	355	46	78	18	7	4	39	33	90	23
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.278	68	209	25	58	3	0	0	13	21	53	19
Perry, Jason (OF)	.246	66	228	38	56	10	1	10	25	25	65	5
Phillips, Jason (C)	.275	35	120	14	33	7	0	4	15	7	14	0
Sammons, Clint (C)	.237	81	278	23	66	18	0	1	22	21	60	7
Taylor, Reggie (OF)	.248	53	153	17	38	5	3	2	11	11	28	5
Thorman, Scott (1B/3B)	.251	101	387	47	97	22	2	19	56	19	83	7
Timmons, Wes (INF)	.251	81	239	39	60	18	0	2	26	45	25	12

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-2	8.02	25	1	0	46.0	61	41	41	21	33	.323
Bueno, Francisley	2-6	5.23	19	14	0	84.1	100	51	49	29	59	.297
DeSalvo, Matt	2-11	4.87	34	8	0	92.1	98	58	50	55	91	.279
Gamble, Jerome	0-5	7.88	8	6	0	32.0	38	29	28	14	25	.292
James, Chuck	5-5	2.92	16	15	0	86.1	76	34	28	39	74	.237
Julio, Jorge	1-2	2.04	38	0	13	39.2	33	15	9	23	45	.231
Lawrence, Brian	6-6	5.55	16	15	0	86.0	113	55	53	19	54	.318
Lerew, Anthony	1-4	4.14	9	8	0	37.0	43	24	17	20	22	.295
Moss, Damian	5-9	3.92	41	15	0	96.1	105	57	42	62	86	.282
Nelson, Brad	2-3	6.06	20	5	1	35.2	50	27	24	12	26	.333
Nix, Michael	1-1	3.07	11	0	0	14.2	14	6	5	8	16	.246
Parr, James	5-3	3.23	10	9	0	55.2	49	20	20	14	44	.233
Ridgway, Jeff	4-0	5.47	44	0	4	52.2	67	38	32	26	57	.315
Rouwenhorst, Jonathon	9-10	5.27	41	14	1	112.2	140	76	66	44	78	.320
Schreiber, Zach	2-2	2.97	34	0	6	39.1	29	13	13	26	29	.209
Shibilo, Andy	1-1	6.37	32	0	1	41.0	53	30	29	29	39	.315
Williamson, Scott	2-1	6.61	15	1	0	16.1	18	12	12	5	20	.277



MISSISSIPPI

73-66

SOUTHERN LEAGUE AA | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.182	48	132	13	24	4	1	0	10	10	39	1
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.235	79	255	26	60	13	0	2	29	34	49	0
Camarena, Jose (C)	.244	62	213	17	52	9	0	3	25	11	47	1
Creek, Greg (1B/3B)	.268	119	351	49	94	20	7	6	55	42	74	0
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.191	92	199	19	38	6	0	5	22	10	47	10
Gorecki, Reid (OF)	.292	63	240	51	70	9	0	10	43	31	47	8
Guzman, Javier (SS)	.253	108	387	50	98	15	4	4	35	19	49	8
Hernandez, Diory (2B/SS)	.286	22	77	8	22	3	1	2	8	6	8	1
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.241	16	54	9	13	3	1	1	7	7	17	0
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.285	96	393	54	112	17	9	3	45	39	68	22
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.219	46	137	14	30	8	1	3	18	15	39	0
Ka'aihue, Kala (1B)	.274	126	376	63	103	23	2	14	61	88	119	0
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.227	26	97	8	22	3	0	1	2	6	20	4
Perry, Jason (OF)	.314	38	137	34	43	11	2	13	41	23	44	1
Pope, Van (3B)	.260	99	350	47	91	21	1	4	50	35	54	8
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.269	84	297	46	80	18	6	10	51	49	88	12
Young, Matt (OF)	.289	135	491	74	142	16	11	3	50	68	62	30

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-0	5.56	14	0	0	22.2	26	18	14	10	14	.289
Bush, Paul	0-1	3.24	12	0	0	16.2	10	6	6	7	21	.175
Dumesnil, Bryan	2-1	4.41	15	0	1	16.1	15	8	8	10	14	.242
Gamble, Jerome	3-5	4.09	23	7	0	66.0	58	32	30	25	51	.235
Gunderson, Kevin	2-2	4.74	36	0	3	43.2	46	23	23	14	22	.289
Hanson, Thomas	8-4	3.03	18	18	0	98.0	70	39	33	41	114	.197
Heath, Deunte	4-5	5.56	13	11	0	66.1	76	50	41	32	46	.284
Jung, Sung Ki	2-2	4.41	49	0	6	63.1	63	37	31	24	59	.253
Medlen, Kris	7-8	3.52	36	17	1	120.1	121	47	47	27	120	.268
Nelson, Brad	1-0	4.47	23	1	1	46.1	53	30	23	14	30	.286
Nix, Michael	4-3	6.34	36	0	1	49.2	52	42	35	36	41	.271
Parr, James	8-4	3.69	18	17	0	95.0	87	40	39	37	81	.246
Payano, Nelson	3-2	3.95	27	0	0	43.1	41	22	19	22	36	.253
Redmond, Todd	13-5	3.52	28	27	0	166.1	164	72	65	33	133	.257
Sencion, Carlos	6-4	4.72	25	12	0	76.1	73	40	40	44	63	.255
Smith, Dan	1-7	6.16	14	12	0	61.1	81	45	42	34	47	.328
Valdez, Luis	4-3	2.76	55	0	28	65.1	48	30	20	36	77	.208



MYRTLE BEACH

89-51

CAROLINA LEAGUE
ADVANCED A

COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD
(843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.290	9	31	2	9	2	1	0	1	4	8	2
Britton, Phillip (C)	.246	84	297	30	73	10	1	6	26	11	42	5
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.290	116	469	86	136	32	3	16	78	35	51	6
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.255	88	330	56	84	15	1	19	67	50	58	4
Flowers, Tyler (C)	.288	122	413	72	119	32	1	17	88	98	102	8
Gress, Randy (INF)	.169	27	83	6	14	4	0	1	9	3	29	0
Hernandez, Gorkys (OF)	.264	100	406	75	107	23	6	5	42	48	79	20
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.182	7	22	3	4	2	0	0	4	2	4	0
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.234	93	342	68	80	23	2	19	56	45	122	14
Jones, Travis (2B)	.248	128	463	81	115	29	3	16	78	77	107	17
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.224	19	58	6	13	1	0	1	9	1	12	1
Marciel, Robert (INF)	.262	53	145	22	38	9	0	1	15	20	28	4
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.274	131	519	93	142	47	5	21	93	28	139	2
Owings, Jon (OF)	.275	123	425	65	117	29	5	16	62	37	95	9
Powell, Brandon (3B)	.225	33	120	16	27	6	0	3	11	10	31	4
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.280	108	379	56	106	26	5	11	56	33	66	9
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.211	31	95	20	20	6	1	1	6	11	22	2

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Broadway, Michael	2-2	3.40	22	2	2	50.1	37	23	19	21	33	.199
Butts, Brett	3-4	4.16	36	2	10	75.2	62	40	35	24	66	.220
Chapman, Jaye	4-2	3.34	13	1	0	29.2	30	13	11	12	25	.259
Cofield, Kyle	8-6	3.26	24	22	0	116.0	113	54	42	66	80	.260
Diamond, Scott	12-2	2.79	17	15	0	100.0	95	42	31	28	85	.245
Dumesnil, Bryan	3-0	1.18	32	0	12	38.0	24	11	5	20	53	.175
Fellman, Nicholas	4-4	3.67	44	0	8	54.0	55	31	22	21	51	.263
Gearrin, Cory	3-1	5.32	17	0	0	23.2	19	14	14	21	36	.218
Gunderson, Kevin	1-0	1.04	15	0	10	17.1	13	3	2	6	20	.197
Heath, Deunte	9-2	3.11	14	14	0	84.0	78	40	29	41	53	.247
Lyman, Jeff	3-6	4.59	32	7	0	84.1	75	50	43	46	82	.240
Reynoso, Ryne	10-6	3.36	27	26	0	131.1	121	58	49	37	105	.247
Rivas, Carlos	6-4	5.20	25	7	0	72.2	75	54	42	32	54	.263
Rohrbough, Cole	2-2	3.41	5	5	0	31.2	27	16	12	8	28	.233
Tejeda, Ferdin	2-1	2.43	28	0	4	40.2	33	13	11	9	29	.220
Vines, Chris	4-1	3.98	20	13	2	86.0	86	44	38	21	77	.258
Wilson, Tyler	2-1	3.24	24	0	2	33.1	27	16	12	17	46	.218



ROME

56-81

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE
CLASS A

STATE MUTUAL STADIUM
(706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Chris (C)	.221	27	77	5	17	6	0	0	6	11	36	0
Berres, David (OF)	.241	77	249	25	60	7	0	1	21	42	56	6
Coe, Adam (INF)	.255	105	392	42	100	28	1	7	45	15	96	6
Dominguez, Javier (C)	.207	39	140	10	29	4	1	1	8	11	33	6
Fisher, Michael (SS/2B)	.253	123	446	50	113	20	2	4	38	31	94	10
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.316	130	491	70	155	33	7	18	95	46	84	5
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.186	27	102	6	19	1	0	0	4	2	20	1
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.323	120	449	88	145	27	6	11	52	49	74	15
Johnson, Benji (C)	.218	69	243	26	53	7	0	4	17	19	50	3
Johnson, Cody	.252	127	468	62	118	26	1	26	89	40	177	8
Kennelly, Mathew	.457	10	35	4	16	5	0	0	10	2	8	0
Lee, C.J.	.235	95	332	37	78	16	4	2	27	19	82	10
Lundahl, Chad	.248	68	254	25	63	14	1	4	27	5	39	1
Miles, Cole	.239	118	443	58	106	9	5	1	15	35	74	28
Rodriguez, Concepcion	.267	19	60	8	16	2	0	3	13	12	16	1
Shultz, Stephen	.204	15	49	4	10	1	0	3	6	1	13	0
Sime, Samuel	.211	76	261	33	55	10	1	4	20	11	57	10

FARM STATISTICS



DANVILLE

35-32

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
ROOKIE ADVANCED

LEGION FIELD
(434) 797-3792

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Berres, David (OF)	.300	6	20	4	6	0	0	1	5	6	4	0
Campusano, Joel (2B)	.291	50	189	27	55	9	3	0	19	22	28	5
Elkerson, Mike (OF)	.228	29	101	18	23	7	1	1	11	8	35	0
Fuller, Chais (INF)	.295	49	173	26	51	17	1	3	20	11	35	1
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.337	67	258	27	87	23	0	4	31	13	41	0
Gress, Randy (INF)	.417	8	24	8	10	4	1	0	5	1	8	1
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.246	44	167	14	41	9	0	4	25	8	37	0
Miles, Kuyannis (OF)	.225	26	89	10	20	2	1	1	8	3	32	2
Moody, Shayne (SS)	.272	58	228	29	62	11	1	0	15	21	40	0
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.208	20	72	6	15	3	0	0	6	4	33	1
Redden, Ray (C)	.185	11	27	0	5	0	0	0	1	3	6	0
Rodriguez, Gerardo (1B)	.253	58	221	31	56	11	3	13	49	17	67	1
Shehan, Chris (OF)	.277	65	235	34	65	11	3	5	22	22	53	6
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.182	44	154	14	28	2	0	3	15	7	24	1
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.272	65	243	42	66	11	6	3	33	11	57	13
White, Will (OF/2B)	.241	28	58	13	14	2	0	0	2	6	17	6

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Beachy, Brandon	2-0	2.25	6	0	0	12.0	12	5	3	2	16	.261
Bullard, Adam	1-1	4.09	11	0	0	22.0	26	15	10	7	24	.286
Clemens, Paul	3-3	3.39	12	8	1	58.1	57	33	22	18	57	.252
Delgado, Randall	3-8	3.13	14	14	0	69.0	63	32	24	30	81	.249
Francis, David	5-3	2.35	11	8	0	53.2	38	18	14	17	69	.203
Himpsl, Derick	0-1	6.86	15	0	0	19.2	21	19	15	23	26	.269
Hodges, Casey	4-5	2.47	12	12	0	69.1	57	25	19	16	56	.225
Kent, Steven	1-0	3.68	12	3	0	29.1	25	13	12	9	31	.231
Kimbrel, Craig	1-2	0.47	12	0	6	19.0	5	4	1	10	27	.076
Ladd, Timothy	0-1	4.91	8	2	0	18.1	19	12	10	12	14	.264
McMillan, Clayton	0-0	2.42	18	0	5	22.1	21	8	6	9	32	.239
Paulino, Angelo	2-2	3.38	15	7	1	48.0	39	23	18	18	60	.217
Railsback, Cody	5-1	4.70	14	1	1	38.1	49	27	20	11	41	.295
Reid, Rico	0-0	2.45	11	1	2	22.0	20	7	6	10	22	.235
Small, Matthew	1-2	2.55	13	0	6	17.2	13	5	5	6	27	.200
Sullivan, Richard	2-0	1.40	4	4	0	19.1	10	4	3	0	22	.149
Teheran, Julio	1-2	6.60	6	6	0	15.0	18	12	11	4	17	.305



GULF COAST

29-29

GULF COAST LEAGUE
ROOKIE

CHAMPION STADIUM AT DISNEY
(407) 939-2301

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Adair, Travis (INF)	.289	51	197	27	57	6	2	0	20	19	42	10
Barnett, Tyler (2B/SS)	.181	33	94	10	17	2	1	0	4	7	26	1
Brooks, Robert (2B)	.329	47	155	30	51	7	5	3	20	15	27	12
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.252	58	218	24	55	14	4	2	25	13	35	4
Elorriaga-Matra, Daniel (C)	.350	17	60	11	21	5	0	1	11	1	6	1
Feliz, Anthony (OF)	.278	48	144	17	40	9	0	2	14	1	23	6
Hanson, Jake (3B)	.246	54	171	36	42	6	0	3	17	26	51	6
Henry, Rashod (OF)	.163	23	49	4	8	0	2	0	8	3	11	5
Hiller, Layton (OF)	.203	44	133	13	27	7	1	5	18	10	36	1
Kramer, Matt (C)	.207	13	29	3	6	2	0	1	4	2	2	0
Maddox, Chadwick (OF)	.252	44	151	19	38	16	0	4	22	4	27	2
Marval, Osman (C/3B)	.213	36	75	9	16	2	1	0	5	6	12	1
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.255	31	94	18	24	3	0	3	11	3	24	6
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.268	41	123	18	33	4	0	0	11	10	27	7
Shimabukuro, Ryohei (1B)	.253	47	150	14	38	6	0	1	19	8	18	0
Voelkel, Ryan (1B)	.194	33	62	6	12	2	0	2	12	10	14	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Avilan, Luis	0-3	2.58	10	4	0	38.1	31	14	11	15	49	.217
Bush, Paul	0-1	1.74	5	3	0	10.1	5	3	2	13	135	
Delgado, Dimaster	5-1	4.31	11	3	0	39.2	51	22	19	9	39	.297
DeVall, Brett	0-0	0.93	4	3	0	9.2	4	1	1	2	7	.125
Farrell, Kyle	0-5	4.58	10	6	0	35.1	43	22	18	17	28	.293
Hung, Chen-En	4-1	2.30	14	0	0	27.1	23	14	7	14	26	.223
Lagua, Eligio	0-1	4.12	16	0	4	19.2	18	10	9	10	24	.243
Lopez, Daniel	2-4	2.57	18	0	3	28.0	31	13	8	13	26	.277
Murillo, Eliezer	0-3	5.06	16	0	2	21.1	22	14	12	13	16	.272
Oberholtzer, Brett	4-1	2.89	10	0	0	37.1	34	16	12	10	32	.241
Rodriguez, Santos	1-2	2.79	14	0	5	29.0	16	12	9	13	45	.155
Santiago, Jose	0-0	4.91	6	4	0	11.0	10	6	6	3	11	.227
Spruill, Ezekiel	7-0	2.93	10	3	0	40.0	42	16	13	8	32	.268
Stovall, Robert	1-1	6.30	7	3	0	20.0	20	15	14	14	29	.250
Surinach, Julio	2-2	6.28	10	1	0	28.2	35	27	20	20	28	.294
Wohlever, Terrence	1-0	2.53	10	0	0	10.2	8	3	3	16	6	.211

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

Rome, on Aug. 30. The former University of Virginia standout was a fifth-round pick in June after entering the spring as a projected first-round selection...

The Braves received a quick look at outfielder **Luis Sumoza**, acquired from the Red Sox in the deal that sent **Mark Kotsay** to Boston. The 20-year-old native of Venezuela had a hit in four of the five games he played for Rome after batting .301 with 11 homers and 38 RBIs at Lowell in the New York-Penn League. The Braves believe Sumoza has a solid chance to make an impact in the organization next year.



DANVILLE

ROOKIE ADVANCED

DANVILLE finished in second place in the Appalachian League's East Division with a 35-32 record, five games behind first-place Pulaski...

After scuffling during the first half at Rome, third baseman **Jon Gilmore** excelled upon joining Danville in June. He went on to lead the Appalachian League with 87 hits and 23 doubles while tying for third with a

.337 batting average...

First baseman **Gerardo Rodriguez** tied for first in the league with 49 RBIs and placed third with 13 home runs. Outfielder **L.V. Ware** ranked third with six triples...

The D-Braves paced the AL in ERA and had several pitchers rank among the league leaders. **Casey Hodges** was second in the league with a 2.47 ERA, and **David Francis** placed fourth with 69 strikeouts. **Randall Delgado** placed ninth in the league with a 3.13 ERA and was second with 81 strikeouts...

Angelo Paulino shared the Appalachian League Pitcher of the Week award for the period Aug. 18-24. Paulino, a righthander who signed with Atlanta in October 2006 out of the Dominican Republic, split the season between the rotation and bullpen and allowed only 39 hits in 48 innings, resulting in an opponents' batting average of .217.



GULF COAST

ROOKIE

THE BRAVES finished in third place in the six-team North Division of the Gulf Coast League with a 29-29 record...

Second baseman **Robert Brooks** con-

cluded the season ranked third in the GCL with a .426 on-base percentage and fourth with a .329 batting average...

Corner outfielder **Chadwick Maddox**, a 13th-round pick in 2006 out of the University of Tennessee, tied for first in the GCL with 16 doubles....

Third baseman **Jake Hanson** tied for third in the GCL with 36 runs scored... Second-round draft pick **Zeke Spruill** led the GCL with seven wins...

First baseman **Ryohei Shimabukuro** concluded the season on a strong note by stroking eight hits in his last 13 at-bats over a four-game stretch...

First-round pick **Brett DeVall** did not pitch after Aug. 11 due to tenderness in his arm and shoulder. DeVall had a 1.80 ERA in four outings. The Braves admit they were being cautious with the young pitcher and have scheduled him to appear in Instructional League...

Shortstop **Travis Adair** posted a team-best .328 batting average in August...

Santos Rodriguez posted 20 strikeouts in 13 innings during his six appearances in August... Righthander **Chen-En Hung** allowed only one earned run in six relief outings in August.

INDIVIDUAL STATS

AS OF 9/11/08



	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
JONES	.362	117	420	78	152	22	1	21	71	239	81	59	4	0	.462	.569	12
RIGHT	.388		139		54	7	1	4	19	75	24	16			.476	.540	
LEFT	.349		281		98	15	0	17	52	164	57	43			.456	.584	
PRADO	.337	63	169	26	57	14	4	2	28	85	14	23	2	1	.389	.503	6
INFANTE	.308	83	266	41	82	21	3	3	35	118	20	35	0	1	.355	.444	10
MCCANN	.297	132	468	65	139	37	1	23	82	247	52	60	5	0	.370	.528	7
ESCOBAR	.290	129	507	70	147	24	2	10	60	205	58	62	2	5	.367	.404	16
ANDERSON	.288	25	80	12	23	4	1	1	6	32	7	17	6	1	.345	.400	1
JOHNSON	.280	135	490	77	138	36	6	11	62	218	50	101	10	5	.347	.445	11
JONES, B.	.268	32	97	13	26	9	1	1	13	40	6	23	0	0	.314	.412	0
BLANCO	.255	132	416	51	106	13	4	1	37	130	73	96	13	5	.371	.313	2
DIAZ	.250	42	132	9	33	2	0	2	14	41	3	32	4	2	.270	.311	1
NORTON	.241	98	162	24	39	10	0	6	27	67	25	37	0	0	.342	.414	2
RIGHT	.170		47		8	2	0	3	9	19	6	15			.264	.404	
LEFT	.270		115		31	8	0	3	18	48	19	22			.373	.417	
AL	.438	6	16	2	7	2	0	0	4	9	2	4	0	0	.500	.563	1
FRANCOEUR	.232	140	539	62	125	28	2	11	65	190	36	96	0	1	.290	.353	4
GOTAY	.223	79	94	9	21	5	0	2	7	32	12	29	1	1	.311	.340	2
RIGHT	.125		24		3	0	0	0	0	3	4	10			.250	.125	
LEFT	.257		70		18	5	0	2	7	29	8	19			.333	.414	
LILLIBRIDGE	.196	19	56	6	11	5	0	1	6	19	2	15	1	0	.237	.339	2
KOTCHMAN	.183	28	93	11	17	3	1	0	10	22	13	12	0	0	.306	.237	0
AL	.287	100	373	47	107	24	0	12	54	167	18	23	2	1	.327	.448	2
SAMMONS	.175	18	40	2	7	0	0	1	4	10	3	9	0	0	.233	.250	0
MILLER	.086	28	58	4	5	0	0	1	3	8	5	14	0	0	.159	.138	2
ATLANTA	.270	147	5,079	685	1,369	286	31	123	659	2,086	570	917	50	26	.346	.411	91
OPPONENTS	.261	147	4,969	707	1,299	290	39	135	675	2,072	534	974	99	33	.335	.417	91

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) C. Jones (.667-2-0-1), Diaz (.375-3-0-0), Norton (.313-15-2-13), Prado (.267-4-1-7), Miller (.250-1-1-2), Johnson (.250-2-1-4), McCann (.250-2-0-0), Francoeur (.250-1-0-0), Gotay (.246-14-1-4), Infante (.182-2-0-4), Blanco (.143-1-0-0), Anderson (.000-0-0-0), Escobar (.000-0-0-0), B. Jones (.000-0-0-0), Kotchman (.000-0-0-0), Sammons (.000-0-0-0), TEAM (.251-47-6-35).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Parr (.333-1-0-0), Hampton (.278-5-0-4), Carlyle (.250-2-0-0), Bennett (.222-2-0-1), Campillo (.200-8-0-2), Hudson (.146-6-0-2), Reyes (.111-3-0-2), Jurrjens (.109-6-0-0), Glavine (.105-2-0-1), Morton (.059-1-0-0), Acosta (.000-0-0-0), Boyer (.000-0-0-0), Gonzalez (.000-0-0-0), Nunez (.000-0-0-0), Smoltz (.000-0-0-1), STAFF (.142-36-0-13).

BATTING KEY: Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors

PITCHING KEY: W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
PARR	1-0	0.00	2	2	0	0	12	7	0	0	0	0	3	8	1	.175
MOYLAN	0-1	1.59	7	0	2	1	5.2	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	.217
JULIO	1-0	1.69	6	0	4	0	5.1	5	1	1	0	3	7	3		.238
AL	0-0	5.60	15	0	6	0	17.2	18	11	11	3	0	11	15	3	.277
SMOLTZ	3-2	2.57	6	5	0	0	28	25	8	8	2	0	8	36	2	.229
SORIANO	0-1	2.57	14	0	5	3	14	7	5	4	1	1	9	16	1	.149
HUDSON	11-7	3.17	23	22	0	0	142	125	53	50	11	2	40	85	3	.239
RIDGWAY	0-0	3.52	8	0	2	0	7.2	5	3	3	2	1	1	6	0	.179
OHMAN	4-1	3.58	77	0	16	1	55.1	48	25	22	3	1	22	52	2	.230
JURRJENS	13-9	3.62	29	29	0	0	176.1	178	81	71	11	4	64	136	2	.262
CAMPILLO	7-7	3.70	36	22	3	0	146	138	64	60	15	1	35	102	2	.251
ACOSTA	3-5	3.86	42	0	20	3	49	46	25	21	7	1	26	26	4	.256
BENNETT	3-6	4.11	63	4	11	3	87.2	80	41	40	5	6	43	59	5	.250
CARLYLE	1-0	4.22	39	0	5	0	53.1	47	26	25	5	1	23	48	3	.239
GONZALEZ	0-2	4.28	29	0	23	9	27.1	22	18	13	4	1	12	33	0	.216
TAVAREZ	1-2	4.50	35	0	10	0	36	41	22	18	3	2	15	37	1	.283
ATL	1-1	3.45	28	0	9	0	28.2	28	12	11	3	2	10	27	1	.255
AL	0-1	6.39	9	0	2	0	12.2	18	12	9	0	1	9	6	1	.346
NUNEZ	0-2	5.24	17	0	7	0	22.1	27	13	13	0	1	16	16	2	.303
REYES	3-10	5.26	20	19	0	0	104.1	117	65	61	12	3	50	74	2	.291
GLAVINE	2-4	5.54	13	13	0	0	63.1	67	40	39	11	1	37	37	0	.288
HAMPTON	2-2	5.60	9	9	0	0	53	61	34	33	8	0	18	24	0	.299
BOYER	2-6	5.89	75	0	17	1	70.1	71	50	46	9	2	24	66	2	.261
MORTON	4-8	6.32	15	15	0	0	72.2	80	56	51	9	2	38	47	2	.279
DESSENS	0-1	30.00	3	0	0	0	3	8	10	10	1	0	4	1	0	.533
ATLANTA	65-82	4.50	147	147	145	21	1,309.1	1,299	707	655	135	39	534	974	39	.261
OPPONENTS	82-65	4.37	147	147	141	34	1,314	1,369	685	638	123	40	570	917	41	.270



BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
1	3/30	WAS	A	L	2-3	Moylan (0-1)	Jones (1)	0-1	5	-1/2
2	3/31	PIT	H	L	11-12 (12)	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1)	0-2	5	-2
3	4/2	PIT	H	W	10-2	Jurrjens (1-0)	Diaz (1), Teixeira (1), Escobar (1)	1-2	T-3	-2
4	4/3	PIT	H	L	3-4 (10)	Resop (0-1)	--	1-3	5	-2
5	4/5	NYM	H	W	11-5	Hudson (1-0)	Johnson (1)	2-3	T-4	-1
6	4/6	NYM	H	W	3-1	Smoltz (1-0)	Teixeira (2)	3-3	T-1	--
7	4/7	COL	A	L	1-2	Boyer (0-2)	--	3-4	T-2	-1
8	4/8	COL	A	L	3-4	Jurrjens (1-1)	Kotsay (1)	3-5	T-3	-1 1/2
9	4/9	COL	A	L	6-12	James (0-1)	McCann (2)	3-6	T-4	-2 1/2
10	4/11	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (2-0)	Escobar (2)	4-6	4	-3
11	4/12	WAS	A	W	10-2	Smoltz (2-0)	Francoeur 2 (3), McCann (3)	5-6	4	-2
12	4/13	WAS	A	L	4-5	Glavine (0-1)	Jones (2)	5-7	4	-2
13	4/15	FLA	A	L	0-4	Jurrjens (1-2)	--	5-8	4	-3
14	4/16	FLA	A	L	5-6	Hudson (2-1)	Escobar (3)	5-9	4	-4
15	4/17	FLA	A	W	8-0	Smoltz (3-0)	Jones 2 (4), Teixeira (3), McCann (4), Johnson (2)	6-9	4	-3
16	4/18	LAD	H	W	6-1	Ohman (1-0)	Jones 2 (6)	7-9	4	-2 1/2
17	4/19	LAD	H	W	4-1	James (1-1)	--	8-9	3	-2 1/2
18	4/20	LAD	H	W	6-1	Jurrjens (2-2)	Johnson (3), Teixeira (4)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/21	WAS	H	W	7-3	Hudson (3-1)	McCann (5)	10-9	3	-2
20	4/22	WAS	H	L	0-6	Smoltz (3-1)	--	10-10	4	-2
21	4/23	FLA	H	L	2-7	Bennett (0-1)	Diaz (2)	10-11	4	-3
22	4/24	FLA	H	W	7-4	James (2-1)	Jones (7)	11-11	4	-2
23	4/25	NYM	A	W	6-3	Jurrjens (3-2)	Johnson (4)	12-11	3	-2
24	4/26	NYM	A	L	3-4	Hudson (3-2)	--	12-12	4	-2
25	4/27	NYM	A	L	3-6	Smoltz (3-2)	--	12-13	4	-3
26	4/29	WAS	A	L	3-6	Boyer (0-3)	Jones (8)	12-14	4	-3
27	4/30	WAS	A	L	2-3 (12)	Acosta (0-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/2	CIN	H	W	2-0	Hudson (4-2)	McCann (6)	13-15	4	-3
29	5/3	CIN	H	W	9-1	Reyes (1-0)	--	14-15	4	-2
30	5/4	CIN	H	W	14-7	Ring (1-0)	Jones (9), Kotsay (2)	15-15	4	-2
31	5/6	SD	H	W	5-3	Jurrjens (4-2)	Jones (10), Kotsay (3)	16-15	T-3	-1 1/2
32	5/7	SD	H	W	5-2	Hudson (5-2)	--	17-15	T-3	-1 1/2
33	5/8	SD	H	W	5-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	18-15	3	-1 1/2
34	5/9	PIT	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-2)	--	18-16	4	-2 1/2
35	5/10	PIT	A	L	2-5	James (2-2)	Teixeira (5)	18-17	4	-3 1/2
36	5/12 (1 of 2)	PIT	A	L	0-5	Jurrjens (4-3)	--	18-18	4	-4 1/2
37	5/12 (2 of 2)	PIT	A	W	8-1	Hudson (6-2)	McCann (7)	19-18	4	-3 1/2
38	5/13	PHI	A	L	4-5	Reyes (1-1)	--	19-19	4	-3 1/2
39	5/14	PHI	A	W	8-6	Glavine (1-1)	Escobar (4), Jones (11), Johnson (5)	20-19	4	-2 1/2
40	5/15	PHI	A	L	0-5	James (2-3)	--	20-20	4	-3
41	5/16	OAK	H	W	3-2	Acosta (2-1)	--	21-20	4	-2
42	5/17	OAK	H	L	4-5	Hudson (6-3)	--	21-21	4	-3
43	5/18	OAK	H	W	5-2	Reyes (2-1)	--	22-21	4	-2
44	5/20 (1 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-1	Glavine (2-1)	McCann (8)	23-21	3	-1 1/2
45	5/20 (2 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-2	Campillo (1-0)	Kotsay (4)	24-21	2	-1 1/2
46	5/21	NYM	H	W	11-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	Jones (12), Francoeur (4)	25-21	2	-1 1/2
47	5/22	NYM	H	W	4-2	Hudson (7-3)	--	26-21	2	-1 1/2
48	5/23	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Reyes (2-2)	--	26-22	2	-1 1/2
49	5/24	ARZ	H	W	3-1	Boyer (1-3)	Francoeur (5)	27-22	2	-1
50	5/25	ARZ	H	L	3-9	Glavine (2-2)	--	27-23	2	-2 1/2
51	5/26	ARZ	H	W	7-3	Acosta (3-1)	McCann (9)	28-23	2	-2 1/2
52	5/27	MIL	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-3)	Johnson (6), Blanco (1)	28-24	3	-2 1/2
53	5/28	MIL	A	L	0-1	Reyes (2-3)	--	28-25	3	-2 1/2
54	5/29	MIL	A	W	8-1	Campillo (2-0)	Teixeira (6)	29-25	3	-2
55	5/30	CIN	A	L	2-3 (11)	Ring (1-1)	--	29-26	3	-2 1/2
56	5/31	CIN	A	L	7-8 (10)	Acosta (3-2)	Norton (1), Teixeira (7), Francoeur (6)	29-27	3	-3
57	6/1	CIN	A	L	2-6	Hudson (7-4)	Teixeira (8), McCann (10)	29-28	4	-3 1/2

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
58	6/2	FLA	H	W	7-5 (10)	Ohman (2-0)	Francoeur (7), Teixeira (9), Escobar (5)	30-28	3	-3 1/2
59	6/3	FLA	H	W	5-4	Ohman (3-0)	Jones (13)	31-28	3	-3 1/2
60	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Acosta (3-3)	--	31-29	T-3	-3 1/2
61	6/5	FLA	H	W	7-5	Jurrjens (6-3)	Escobar (6), McCann (11), Jones (14)	32-29	3	-3 1/2
62	6/6	PHI	H	L	3-4 (10)	Acosta (3-4)	McCann (12)	32-30	3	-4 1/2
63	6/7	PHI	H	L	2-6	Reyes (2-4)	Jones (15)	32-31	3	-5 1/2
64	6/8	PHI	H	L	3-6	Boyer (1-4)	Teixeira (10)	32-32	3	-6 1/2
65	6/10	CHC	A	L	5-10	Glavine (2-3)	Norton (2)	32-33	3	-6 1/2
66	6/11	CHC	A	L	2-7	Bennett (0-4)	Miller (1)	32-34	3	-6 1/2
67	6/12	CHC	A	L	2-3 (11)	Acosta (3-5)	Francoeur (8)	32-35	3	-7 1/2
68	6/13	LAA	A	W	5-2	Reyes (3-4)	--	33-35	3	-7 1/2
69	6/14	LAA	A	W	9-4	Morton (1-0)	B. Jones (1), Johnson (7)	34-35	3	-6 1/2
70	6/15	LAA	A	L	0-2	Campillo (2-1)	--	34-36	3	-6 1/2
71	6/16	COL	A	W	7-1	Jurrjens (7-3)	--	35-36	3	-6 1/2
72	6/17	TEX	A	L	5-7	Hudson (7-5)	Infante (1), McCann (13)	35-37	3	-6 1/2
73	6/18	TEX	A	W	5-2	Bennett (1-4)	Jones (16)	36-37	3	-5 1/2
74	6/19	TEX	A	L	4-5	Boyer (1-5)	--	36-38	4	-6
75	6/20	SEA	H	L	2-10	Campillo (2-2)	--	36-39	4	-6
76	6/21	SEA	H	W	5-4	Boyer (2-5)	Gotay (1)	37-39	4	5
77	6/22	SEA	H	W	8-3	Hudson (8-5)	Teixeira 3 (13), McCann (14)	38-39	4	-4
78	6/23	MIL	H	L	1-4	Reyes (3-5)	--	38-40	4	-4 1/2
79	6/24	MIL	H	L	3-4	Morton (1-1)	Teixeira (14)	38-41	4	-4 1/2
80	6/25	MIL	H	W	4-2	Campillo (3-2)	--	39-41	4	-4 1/2
81	6/27	TOR	A	W	4-0	Jurrjens (8-3)	Teixeira (15)	40-41	T-3	-3
82	6/28	TOR	A	L	5-9	Hudson (8-6)	Teixeira (16)	40-42	T-3	-4
83	6/29	TOR	A	L	0-1	Reyes (3-6)	--	40-43	4	-4
84	7/1	PHI	H	L	3-8	Morton (1-2)	--	40-44	4	-5
85	7/2	PHI	H	L	3-7	Campillo (3-3)	Gotay (2), Jones (17)	40-45	4	-6
86	7/3	PHI	H	L	1-4	Jurrjens (8-4)	--	40-46	4	-7
87	7/4	HOU	H	W	6-2	Hudson (9-6)	Johnson (8)	41-46	4	-7
88	7/5	HOU	H	L	1-6	Reyes (3-7)	McCann (15)	41-47	4	-7
89	7/6	HOU	H	W	7-6 (17)	Ring (2-1)	Jones (18)	42-47	4	-6
90	7/7	LAD	A	L	0-3	Campillo (3-4)	--	42-48	4	-6
91	7/8	LAD	A	W	9-3	Jurrjens (9-4)	McCann 2 (17), Teixeira (17)	43-48	4	-5
92	7/9	LAD	A	L	1-2	Hudson (9-7)	Francoeur (9)	43-49	4	-6
93	7/11	SD	A	L	0-4	Reyes (3-8)	--	43-50	4	-7 1/2
94	7/12	SD	A	W	4-1	Morton (2-2)	Lillibridge (1)	44-50	4	-6 1/2
95	7/13	SD	A	W	12-3	Campillo (4-4)	McCann (18)	45-50	4	-6 1/2
96	7/18	WAS	H	W	7-6	Hudson (10-7)	--	46-50	4	-6 1/2
97	7/19	WAS	H	L	2-8	Jurrjens (9-5)	Norton (3)	46-51	4	-6 1/2
98	7/20	WAS	H	L	6-15	Reyes (3-9)	Teixeira 2 (19), Prado (1)	46-52	4	-6 1/2
99	7/21	FLA	A	W	4-0	Campillo (5-4)	--	47-52	4	-6
100	7/22	FLA	A	L	0-4	Morton (2-3)	--	47-53	4	-7
101	7/23	FLA	A	W	9-4	Hudson (11-7)	--	48-53	4	-6
102	7/25	PHI	A	W	8-2	Jurrjens (10-5)	McCann 2 (20)	49-53	4	-6 1/2
103	7/26	PHI	A	L	9-10	Boyer (2-6)	Teixeira (20)	49-54	4	-6 1/2
104	7/27	PHI	A	L	10-12	Tavarez (0-3)	Johnson (9), Infante (2)	49-55	4	-7 1/2
105	7/28	STL	H	L	3-12	Morton (2-4)	--	49-56	4	-7 1/2
106	7/29	STL	H	L	3-8	Soriano (0-1)	--	49-57	4	-8 1/2
107	7/30	STL	H	L	2-7	Jurrjens (10-6)	--	49-58	4	-9
108	7/31	STL	H	W	9-4	Bennett (2-4)	Infante (3), Sammons (1)	50-58	4	-9
109	8/1	MIL	H	L	0-9	James (2-4)	--	50-59	4	-9
110	8/2	MIL	H	L	2-4	Morton (2-5)	--	50-60	4	-9
111	8/3	MIL	H	W	5-0	Campillo (6-4)	--	51-60	4	-10
112	8/4	SF	A	L	2-4	Jurrjens (10-7)	--	51-61	4	-10 1/2
113	8/5	SF	A	W	11-4	Hampton (1-0)	--	52-61	4	-9 1/2
114	8/6	SF	A	L	2-3	James (2-5)	--	52-62	4	-10 1/2
115	8/7	ARZ	A	W	6-4	Morton (3-5)	Kotsay (5)	53-62	4	-9 1/2
116	8/8	ARZ	A	W	11-6	Campillo (7-4)	Jones (19)	54-62	4	-8 1/2
117	8/9	ARZ	A	W	11-4	Jurrjens (11-7)	McCann (21)	55-62	4	-8 1/2
118	8/10	ARZ	A	L	1-6	Hampton (1-1)	--	55-63	4	-9 1/2

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
119	8/13 (1 of 2)	CHC	H	L	2-10	Morton (3-6)	--	55-64	4	-9
120	8/13 (2 of 2)	CHC	H	L	0-8	Campillo (7-5)	--	55-65	4	-9
121	8/14	CHC	H	L	7-11	Glavine (2-4)	Kotsay (6), Francoeur (10)	55-66	4	-10
122	8/15	SF	H	L	1-5	Jurrjens (11-8)	--	55-67	4	-11
123	8/16	SF	H	W	11-5	Hampton (2-1)	Norton (4)	56-67	4	-11
124	8/17	SF	H	L	1-3	Morton (3-7)	--	56-68	4	-12
125	8/18	SF	H	L	0-5	Campillo (7-6)	--	56-69	4	-12
126	8/19	NYM	A	L	3-7	Bennett (2-5)	--	56-70	4	-13
127	8/20	NYM	A	L	3-6	Jurrjens (11-9)	--	56-71	4	-14
128	8/21	NYM	A	L	4-5	Nunez (0-1)	Escobar (7)	56-72	4	-15
129	8/22	STL	A	L	3-18	Morton (3-8)	Norton (5)	56-73	4	-16
130	8/23	STL	A	W	8-4	Carlyle (1-0)	--	57-73	4	-15
131	8/24	STL	A	L	3-6	Reyes (3-10)	--	57-74	4	-15
132	8/26	FLA	H	W	10-9	Ohman (4-0)	--	58-74	4	-15
133	8/27	FLA	H	L	1-4	Hampton (2-2)	--	58-75	4	-15 1/2
134	8/28	FLA	H	W	4-2	Morton (4-8)	McCann (22)	59-75	4	-15
135	8/29	WAS	A	L	3-7	Campillo (7-7)	Norton (6)	59-76	4	-16
136	8/30	WAS	A	L	8-9 (10)	Nunez (0-2)	McCann (23), Prado (2), Jones (20)	59-77	4	-16
137	8/31	WAS	A	L	4-8	Dessens (0-1)	Escobar (8)	59-78	4	-17
138	9/1	FLA	A	L	3-4	Gonzalez (0-1)	--	59-79	4	-18
139	9/2	FLA	A	W	16-14	Julio (1-0)	Anderson (1), Francoeur (11)	60-79	4	-18
140	9/3	FLA	A	L	3-5	Ohman (4-1)	--	60-80	4	-19
141	9/4	WAS	H	W	2-0	Parr (1-0)	--	61-80	4	-18 1/2
142	9/5	WAS	H	W	10-5	Jurrjens (12-9)	--	62-80	4	-17 1/2
143	9/6	WAS	H	L	8-5	Gonzalez (0-2)	Escobar (9)	62-81	4	-17 1/2
144	9/7	WAS	H	L	4-7 (14)	Bennett (2-6)	--	62-82	4	-18 1/2
145	9/9	COL	H	W	5-4 (10)	Tavarez (1-3)	--	63-82	4	-18 1/2
146	9/10	COL	H	W	9-5	Bennett (3-6)	Johnson 2 (11), Jones (21)	64-82	4	-18 1/2
147	9/11	COL	H	W	8-4	Jurrjens (13-9)	Escobar (10)	65-82	4	-18



ROSTER

As of Sept. 11

PITCHERS (17)

46 MANNY ACOSTA
30 JEFF BENNETT
56 BLAINE BOYER
57 JORGE CAMPILLO
38 BUDDY CARLYLE
34 ELMER DESSENS
*47 TOM GLAVINE
51 MIKE GONZALEZ
32 MIKE HAMPTON
*15 TIM HUDSON
65 JORGE JULIO
49 JAIR JURRJENS
50 CHARLIE MORTON
48 VLADIMIR NUNEZ
*58 PETER MOYLAN

13 WILL OHMAN
61 JAMES PARR
37 JO-JO REYES
40 JEFF RIDGWAY
*29 JOHN SMOLTZ
*39 RAFAEL SORIANO
54 JULIAN TAVAREZ

CATCHERS (3)

16 BRIAN MCCANN
27 CORKY MILLER
5 CLINT SAMMONS

INFELDERS (8)

19 YUNEL ESCOBAR
8 RUBEN GOTAY

4 OMAR INFANTE
2 KELLY JOHNSON
10 CHIPPER JONES
22 CASEY KOTCHMAN
1 BRENT LILLIBRIDGE
14 MARTIN PRADO

OUTFIELDERS (5)

24 JOSH ANDERSON
18 GREGOR BLANCO
*23 MATT DIAZ
7 JEFF FRANCOEUR
28 BRANDON JONES
20 GREG NORTON

* DISABLED LIST

OCTOBER

POST-SEASON DATES ARE TENTATIVE, UNOFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 08 DIVISION SERIES	2	3 NLDS 2008	4 NLDS 2008
5 NLDS 2008	6 NLDS 2008	7 NLDS 2008	8	9 08 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	10	11 NLCS 2008
12 NLCS 2008	13 NLCS 2008	14 NLCS 2008	15 NLCS 2008	16 NLCS 2008	17 NLCS 2008	18 NLCS 2008
19	20	21	22 WORLD SERIES 2008	23 WORLD SERIES 2008	24	25 WORLD SERIES 2008
26 WORLD SERIES 2008	27 WORLD SERIES 2008	28	29 WORLD SERIES 2008	30 WORLD SERIES 2008	31	

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token (\$2) and \$5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for children and \$10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday
Sunday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
1 - 3 p.m.

OCTOBER - MARCH

Monday - Saturday

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DEC. 23-JAN. 3

CLOSED

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	\$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	\$7
MILITARY	\$7
GROUP	\$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	\$5
ADULTS	\$7

*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

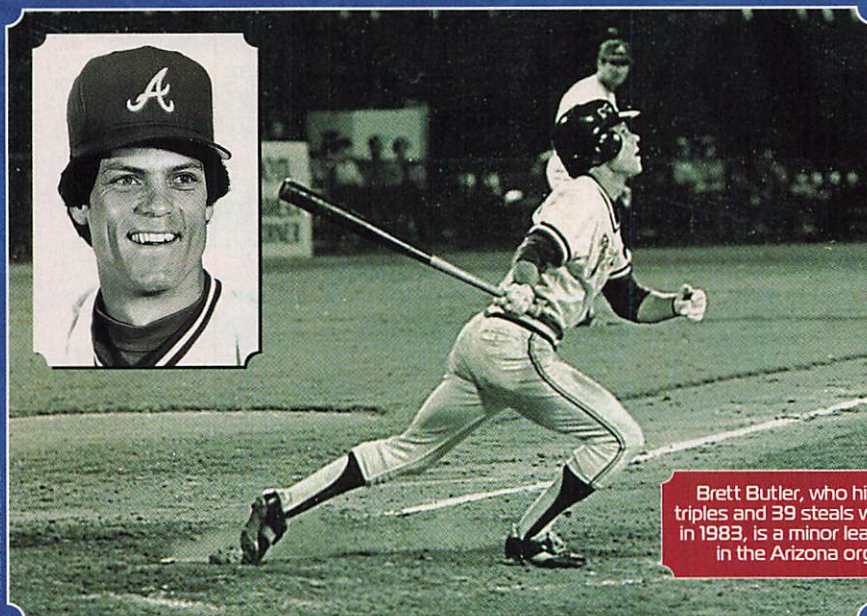


GIVE A GIFT CARD

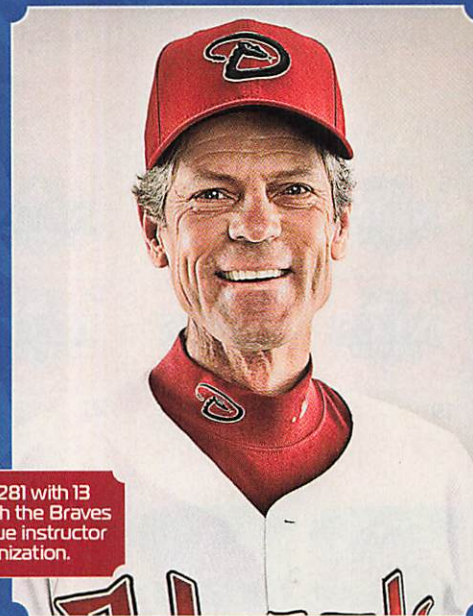
Braves Gift Cards are available in denominations from \$25 to \$250 and can be used to purchase Tickets, Concessions and Merchandise.

To purchase Gift Cards or to obtain more information, visit Braves.com or the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center (call 404-523-5854).





Brett Butler, who hit .281 with 13 triples and 39 steals with the Braves in 1983, is a minor league instructor in the Arizona organization.



ULTIMATE UNDERDOG

Butler Coaching Again After Overcoming Stroke Last Season As Mobile Manager

BY BRIAN KNAPP

ADVERSITY SEEMS DRAWN to Brett Butler, a man who overcame limited physical ability to play 17 productive seasons in the major leagues. His toughest battles, however, have been fought outside the foul lines, far away from the roar of the crowd.

On July 29, 2007, while managing Arizona's Double-A affiliate in Mobile, Ala., Butler lost his balance in the third base coach's box. By the next morning, he was unable to get out of bed. Butler was stricken by a mild stroke of the cerebellum, a side effect, doctors told him, of the treatment he underwent for throat cancer 11 years earlier.

Butler, a devout Christian and married father of four, approached his recovery like every other hurdle he faced in life — he leaped over it cleanly.

"My cup's always half full," Butler said.

Now 51, Butler has returned to work with the Diamondbacks, for whom he serves as an outfield/baserunning coordinator. Making stops at every level, from rookie ball to Triple-A, he evaluates outfield play, baserunning and bunting. The rewards are many.

"In the minor leagues, you have kids who are willing to listen and learn," Butler said. "To give them the fundamentals and see them apply them, that's what I like about it. I'm giving back to the kids."

Having retired as a player in 1997, Butler kept his distance from baseball and remained close to home for several years. The itch to compete, however, never left him.

"My wife and I sat and talked one day," Butler said. "She said, 'Honey, I know how much you love us and how much you love the Lord. Why don't you go back to baseball?'"

So began his second career in the game. Butler has spent the last four seasons in the fertile Arizona farm system, shaping some of the best young talent in the sport, including Justin Upton, the top overall pick in the 2005 draft.

"I wanted to go back to the minor leagues," Butler said. "I wanted to go back to the bushes, put all the things I'd learned under Bobby Cox, Tommy Lasorda and Joe Torre out there and see if they'd work."

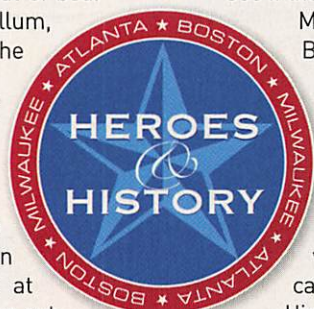
Managing in the majors someday remains a goal for Butler, but with all the curveballs life has thrown in his direction, he seems content to approach the process one small step at a time.

"I'm going to take each year as it comes," he said. "Sure, I'd like to manage. If you can't play, it's the next best thing."

Should that day ever arrive, Butler will have a wealth of knowledge and connections upon which he can call.

His playing career spanned nearly two decades during which he batted .290, amassed 2,375 hits and stole 558 bases — a number that still ranks in the top 25 all-time. Known for his passion and smarts, Butler emerged as one of the premier leadoff men in the game in the late 1980s. He scored 100 runs or more six times and twice led the National League.

A 23rd-round draft choice of the Braves in 1979 out of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Butler reached the big leagues in 1981 and was an everyday player by 1983. He speaks fondly of his days in Atlanta and of the relationships he built there. In 1982, while he was bouncing back and forth between Triple-A and the majors, Butler was befriended by the late Skip Caray. The



longtime broadcaster bought him a round-trip ticket to Richmond, Va., so he could see his daughter, Addie, for the first time.

"That was the kind of person Skip was," Butler said.

Butler spent his first three seasons (1981-83) in Atlanta, becoming a regular for the first time in '83 when he batted .281 with 13 triples and 39 steals. After the season, however, he was traded to Cleveland (with Brook Jacoby and Rick Behenna) in the infamous deal that brought Len Barker to the Braves.

A durable, 5-foot-10, 160-pound center-fielder, Butler played 14 more seasons with the Indians, Dodgers, Giants and Mets, routinely ranking among the league leaders in games played and, in 1991, making the All-Star team and finishing seventh in the MVP voting as a Dodger. On the other hand, Barker, a 15-game winner in 1982 and one of only 17 pitchers to throw a perfect game, won just 10 games in parts of three seasons with the Braves.

"When I was traded, the response we got from the fans in Atlanta was unbelievable," Butler said. "We felt loved. We felt wanted. It was heart-wrenching. I thought, 'How can a guy named Brett Butler be traded out of Atlanta?' It was hard, but once I was traded, I kind of closed that chapter in my career."

A winner of the Lou Gehrig Memorial Award and the Branch Rickey Award, Butler remains active in the community. SCORE International, Professional Athletes Outreach, Winning with Encouragement and Outreach of Hope – all faith-based organizations – are among his charitable interests. Butler also accepts a handful of public speaking engagements each year.

The same tenaciousness that made him a successful player also led to his becoming an effective philanthropist. Butler credits his father – who worked long hours in a print shop to provide for his wife and three children – with instilling blue-collar values in him throughout his life, even after he reached the major leagues.

"He told me, 'Son, this world is a cruel place to live in. People are going to go to the ballpark and pay their hard-earned money to see you play. Always remember that every day is a gift. Go out there every day and give them a show they will remember,'" Butler said.

"I was never satisfied. I was always looking to improve, always trying to stay a step ahead, always looking for that edge."

Butler resides in Scottsdale, Ariz., with his wife of 27 years, Eveline.

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

ERIC PERESTUK

DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

BY STEVE FALL

MOST FANS sitting in Turner Field would never notice when a single light or a faucet isn't functioning. Eric Perestuk would know, though, and his staff would have it fixed before long.

"We're the guys behind the scenes," said Perestuk, the Braves' director of engineering. "I make sure that you can put 50,000 people in this park and let them leave safely in the same way they came in. And also make sure that we can play and broadcast the game."

Getting Turner Field ready for a game requires completing a long systematic list for essential functions like field lighting, temperature, control rooms, broadcasts and bathrooms.

"It takes at least eight hours just to turn the park on," said Perestuk. "We start preparing for a 7:35 game at about 7 o'clock in the morning. And then we don't actually leave until the last fan leaves."

Perestuk's workday lasts between 12 and 16 hours on game days. The responsibilities for his 21-person department include heating and air, electrical, locksmith, cleaning, carpentry, painting, and general maintenance. When the Braves hit the road, the focus of the engineering department turns to repairing anything broken during the previous homestand and cleaning the ballpark.

"It is just a cool place to work," said Perestuk, who grew up a Mets fan in Brooklyn. "I work in an environment where people come to have a good time. So, you're seeing people at their best all the time. That is what I like about what I do."

During the off-season, Perestuk's department may have as many as 30 different construction projects at Turner Field. Last off-season, they completed the SunTrust Club, the super-close seats behind home plate. Perestuk also works on the development and construction of the Braves' minor league ballparks, such as the current project where the Triple-A Gwinnett Braves will play in 2009.

Perestuk first came to Atlanta in 1987. He served as the director of engineering for CNN Center for several years. In 1995, he began working on the reconfiguration of the Olympic Stadium into Turner Field. His job was to make sure the stadium got built with the Braves' interests in mind. After the Olympic Games, an opportunity opened with the team.

"At that point, I was supposed to go back to work for our parent company," said Perestuk. "Then the Braves asked that I stay and set up the operations and maintenance of the facility. So, I became director of engineering."

Perestuk began cleaning air conditioning coils as a summer job during high school. He worked in New York City office buildings and then hotels. After high school, he started going to Hunter College, and then attended a trade school for heating and air. He later became certified as an operating engineer. He did that for several years in hotel chains like Trump and Sheraton Corp.

The 47-year-old Perestuk suggests that people interested in engineering or sports facility maintenance try a summer or seasonal internship.

"I find that the more traditional positions like marketing and sales get many applications for internships, while very few people come with engineering as their goal," he said. "If you like working with your hands, are comfortable with tools, you might be surprised what great opportunities there are just behind the outfield wall."



CARLOS RESTREPO



Dale Murphy (OF/1B/C, 1976-90) was honored by the Mississippi Braves Aug. 25 at Trustmark Park with "Dale Murphy Appreciation Day." Murphy spoke at a luncheon that afternoon, then threw out the ceremonial first pitch prior to that night's game between the Mississippi Braves and the Mobile Baybeats. He also signed autographs for fans.

The 19th World Children's Baseball Fair, conceived by **Hank Aaron** (OF/1B, 1954-74), was held in Aichi, Japan, July 27-Aug. 4. Aaron and legendary Japanese League home run king Sadaharu Oh sponsor the event. According to tournament officials, Aaron envisioned the event to promote friendship between children from around the world through a common enjoyment of baseball and as a positive response to the racial intolerance he endured. Games are played by youths from 25 countries, and coaches clinics are held. For information, visit wcbf.or.jp/english.

Arizona claimed **Wil Ledezma** (LHP, 2007) off waivers from San Diego.

Six of the 10 pre-1943 players being considered by the Veterans Committee for Hall of Fame induction played for the Braves at some point in their careers. They are: **Bill Dahlen** (SS, 1908-09), **Wes Ferrell** (RHP, 1941), **Sherry Magee** (OF/1B, 1915-17), **Mickey Vernon** (1B/OF, 1959), **Bucky Walters** (3B, 1931-32, '50) and **Deacon White** (C/OF/1B, 1873-75, '77). The results are to be announced Dec. 8 at the winter meetings in Las Vegas.

Hall County (Ga.) Commissioners voted to name their new Field of Dreams for challenged young athletes after **Phil Niekro** (RHP, 1964-83, '87). An open house and grand opening at the facility, located at Alberta Banks Park near Flowery Branch, is scheduled Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.

Niekro, a resident of Hall County, was a driving force in the development of the special needs facility.

Steve Avery (LHP, 1990-96) heads the 12-member inaugural induction class of the Pulaski County (Va.) Baseball Hall of Fame announced by the Pulaski Mariners in late August. Avery played his first pro season (1988) in Pulaski, a former Braves farm team, and was 7-1 with a 1.50 ERA. The inductees also included **Grady Little**, the former Dodgers and Red Sox manager who managed Pulaski to the Appalachian League pennant in 1986.

Greg Maddux (RHP, 1993-2003) was traded from San Diego to the Dodgers Aug. 19 in exchange for two minor leaguers to be named. Maddux had to clear waivers and waive his no-trade clause.

Jorge Sosa (RHP, 2005-06), now in the Seattle Mariners organization at Triple-A Tacoma, was suspended for 50 games after testing positive under baseball's minor league drug program. Seattle signed Sosa to a minor league contract in July after he was designated for assignment by the Mets.

Texas' **Jarrod Saltalamacchia** (C/1B, 2007) injured his right forearm making a throw Sept. 1 and was out for the rest of the season.

Braves Hall of Famer **Ralph Garr** (OF, 1968-75) and the late **Tommie Aaron** (1B, 1968, '71) were inducted into the International League Hall of Fame Aug. 31 during a pre-game ceremony at The Diamond in Richmond.

An interview with **Bobby Bragan** (Manager, 1963-66) is featured in a new movie called Signs of the Time that explores the origin and use of hand signals in baseball. The film debuted in late August.

* BIRTHDAYS *

OCTOBER

1 ST	REMY HERMOSO (62) BUZZ CAPRA (61) PETE FALCONE (55) JEFF REARDON (53) ROBERTO KELLY (44) JOHN THOMSON (35)
2 ND	MIKE DE LA HOZ (70) PAUL DOYLE (69) TREY MOORE (36)
3 RD	BOB SKINNER (77) JIM BREAZEALE (59)
4 TH	TED DAVIDSON (69) JIMMY WILLIAMS (65) TONY LA RUSSA (64) DAVE SCHULER (65) CHARLIE LEIBRANDT (52) JOE BOEVER (48)
5 TH	REY SANCHEZ (41)
6 TH	GARY GENTRY (62) STEVE KLINE (61) CHARLIE VAUGHAN (61)
7 TH	TIM UNROE (38)
8 TH	JIMMY KREMERS (43) JOE AYRAULT (37)
9 TH	JOE PEPTONE (68)
10 TH	LARRY MAXIE (68) FRANCISCO CABRERA (42) JOSH ANDERSON (28) GREGG OLSON (42)
11 TH	LUIS POLONIA (44)
12 TH	CHARLIE MORTON (25) FRANK LACORTE (57)
13 TH	LOU KLIMCHOCK (69)
15 TH	DAVID CORTES (35) JUAN CRUZ (30)
16 TH	LEO MAZZONE (80)
17 TH	MIKE SANDLOCK (93) BRIAN SNITKER (53) JOHN ROCKER (34) JOHN ENNIS (29)
18 TH	JERRY ROYSTER (56) TERRY CLARK (48) JEFF WETHERBY (45)
19 TH	SANDY ALOMAR, SR. (65) DAVID PALMER (51) MARK DAVIS (48) JASON SHIELL (32)
20 TH	RUDY SEANEZ (40)
21 ST	EDDIE CARNETT (92) JUAN EICHELBERGER (55) TIM SPOONEYBARGER (29) ANDY MARTE (25)
23 RD	CECIL BUTLER (71) BO MCLAUGHLIN (55) JIM PRESLEY (47)
24 TH	OMAR MORENO (56) RAFAEL BELLARD (47) STEVE ZIEM (47) MARK GRANT (45) MACAY MCBRIDE (26)
25 TH	BOBBY THOMSON (85) ROY HARTSFIELD (83) SKIP GUINN (64) ROWLAND OFFICE (56) TOMMY BOGGS (53) JOE NELSON (34)
26 TH	ARMANDO ALMANZA (36) SCOTT SOBOKOWIAK (31)
27 TH	MIKE LUM (63) BARRY BONNELL (55) TERRY BELL (46) PEDRO SWANN (38) MARTIN PRADO (25) ANTHONY LEREW (26)
28 TH	GARY NEIBAUER (64)
29 TH	BOBBY BRAGAN (91)
30 TH	GERALD PERRY (48) JOE JOHNSON (47)
31 ST	PAUL ZUVELLA (50) FRED MCGRIF (45)



SUBSCRIPTIONS

P.O. Box 80750
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PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
WEB Braves.com/choptalk

PUBLISHER

GARY CARUSO, President
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EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Gary Caruso
COLUMNISTS: Josh Anderson, Jay Busbee, Bobby Cox, Patty Rasmussen, Todd Redmond, Ken Rosenthal (FoxSports.com), Frank Wren
REPORTERS: Bill Ballew, Jay Busbee, Jon Cooper, Steve Fall, Ray Glier, Brian Knapp, Ryan McNally, Patty Rasmussen, Jon Ross
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Paul Abell, Patty Rasmussen, Carlos Restrepo, Bill Settiff, Allison Shirreffs, Walter Victor, Rodger Wood
CARTOONIST: Johnny Sajem

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OFFICE OF PUBLICATION

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PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
E-MAIL Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

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ATLANTA BRAVES STAFF

PUBLIC RELATIONS

BRAD HAINJE - Director of Media Relations
BETH MARSHALL - Director of Public Relations
ANDY PRESSLEY - Publications Manager
Adam Liberman, Meagan Swingle,
Adrienne Midgley

FUN WITH NUMBERS

AT THIS WRITING, Chipper Jones had a five-point lead on Albert Pujols for the NL batting title. Hopefully, by the time you read this, Chipper will be the Braves' first batting champ since Terry Pendleton won the crown and the MVP Award in 1991.

It'll probably be a race right down to the wire, like last season when Chipper lost to Colorado's Matt Holliday on the final day of the season. Chipper says he thinks Pujols is the best hitter in the league. The Cardinals' star certainly is a great hitter, and you can't blame Chipper for his modesty and his respect for Pujols.

However, Chipper doesn't need to take a back seat to anyone. A batting title would help confirm his status in today's game, as well as his place in history. Something else that could do that is his final batting average.

The major league record for season batting average by a switch-hitter is .365 by the legendary Mickey Mantle in 1957. That's exactly what Chipper was hitting as this issue went to press.

The other target for Chipper is highest batting average by a switch-hitter in the NL. That's .355, set by "Gorgeous" George Davis of the New York Giants in 1893 - 115 years ago.

Not that Chipper necessarily needs more credentials to fill out his resume for Cooperstown, because he seems to add something to that almost every week as it is. But the NL record and possibly even the major league record average by a switch-hitter would be an appropriate, and quite impressive, line for his Hall of Fame plaque.

WE'LL NEVER KNOW the true measure of the 2008 Braves. It's easy to say this team just wasn't good enough to win the division or the NL wild card. Maybe that's so, but maybe it's not.

The staggering weight of losing John Smoltz, Tim Hudson and Tom Glavine to season-ending surgery tore the heart out of any chance the Braves had for competing. Those three made just 40 starts and worked only 233.1 innings between them. The result was rookies (we're counting Jo-Jo Reyes as a rookie even though he technical-

ly missed qualifying by 1/3 of an inning) made 60 percent of the team's starts.

The bullpen suffered much the same fate, too.

There can be no blaming injuries for the power outage that doomed the Braves to finish far down in the league in runs scored. Without question, that was the team's biggest shortcoming on paper.

But there's no great team in the NL East. The Mets and the Phillies could have been had, if the pitching remained reasonably healthy. Even then, this Braves team might have come up a little short - but it should have competed into September, as it did the last two seasons.

"The fact is we felt like we prepared to cover some injuries and that we had enough depth to get through short-term injuries," said Frank Wren. "But when they turned to long-term injuries, we couldn't cover them. We felt we had a good team in the spring, and we felt we could compete. I think we were on our way to doing that, and then we lost Smoltz, Glavine and Hudson."

With each missed post-season, the appreciation for what transpired from 1991-2005 grows to mythic proportion. It seems almost like fiction, except we all know it happened - against all odds and really against all reason. It will always rank as one of the greatest organizational achievements in pro sports history.

SOME SUGGEST the Braves will not soon return to the top of the NL East, but there remains a lot of talent at both the major league and minor league levels.

Congratulations to the Mississippi Braves for their stirring run to the Southern League championship and likewise to the Myrtle Beach Pelicans who came up just shy of winning the Carolina League championship.

The Braves need to make some off-season moves to bolster the roster for next year, but there are some exciting prospects down on the farm that are close to being major league ready.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Sept. 19. The November issue will be mailed Oct. 23.

Max Cook and Bryson Levisay receive very unique instruction from John Smoltz in the Braves' bullpen.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



THE TUTOR



JOHN SMOLTZ earned some fans for life Sept. 6 when he spent an hour in the bullpen for a private pitching lesson with four children whose parents purchased the session in an auction to provide financial aid for The Paideia School, a private school in Atlanta. "John Smoltz and the Braves organization were amazing," said **Sean Cook**, father of son, **Max** (10), and daughter **Emery** (8). "The event was a once-in-a-lifetime thing for all of us, and John had not only some great pitching tips, but also some tremendous life lessons for all. He was truly generous with his time, experience and insight." In addition to Cook, his wife, **Martha**, and their children, other families included **Bill Levisay** and his son, **Bryson** (10), and **Rich Besser** and his son, **Jack** (10). After the private session, the group watched batting practice from the owner's box and had the opportunity to meet other players including **Brian McCann**.



JO-JO REYES and his wife, **Jamie**, welcomed their first child, a daughter, **Payton Brooklyn Reyes**, on Sept. 3. Reyes was given permission to return to Atlanta from Miami, where the Braves were playing three games with the Marlins, in order to be with his wife when she gave birth. Payton weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and is doing great.

Braves wives **Alyson Ohman (Will)** and **Jaena Norton (Greg)** co-hosted a baby shower for **Jamie** on Sept. 16 in one of the suites at Turner Field. Many of the Braves wives attended what has become something of an annual event as the Braves' baby boom continues...

Tim and **Kim Hudson** planned a week-long trip to Costa Rica, Oct. 10-17, with 10 other couples. Among others planning the tropical getaway were **Jeff** and **Catie Francoeur**, **Greg** and **Jaena Norton** and former Braves **Andruw Jones** and his wife, **Nicole**, **Pete Orr** and wife, **Jodi**, and **Adam LaRoche** and wife, **Jenn**. Former Oakland A's teammate **Jason Isringhausen** and his wife, **Lorrie**, also made the trip, as did Hudson's niece, **Holly**, and her husband, **Travis Bell**. Some of the planned activities were soaking in the volcanic mud baths, surfing, sunning by the pool,

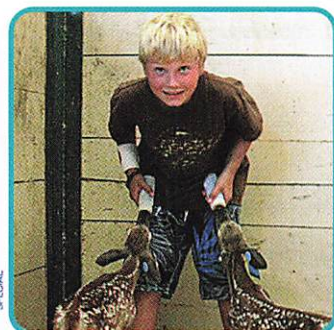
and a treetop zip line tour of the rainforest canopy...

Brian and **Ashley McCann** are to vacation at the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas for a week in October...

Kelly Johnson and his wife, **Lauren**, are to take a two-week trip to Italy, beginning Oct. 20. After flying into Venice, the couple will travel to Cinque Terra, Florence, and the Tuscany region. From there, they'll travel to Rome where they plan to stay three days. "We'll be there 14 nights total," said Lauren. "We're so excited..."

Though he's not a U.S. citizen, yet, **Eddie Perez** was asked by the Georgia governor's office to tape a public service announcement encouraging Hispanic voters to exercise their right to vote this November. "I explained to them I wasn't a citizen, but they said that wasn't a problem," said Perez, who expects to earn his citizenship by 2009...

The **Tim Hudson** family grew by one when they acquired a Springer Spaniel puppy dubbed "Jax" by the Hudsons' son, **Kade**. "I caved," said **Kim**. "And I blame **Blaine Boyer**!" Jax came from the same breeder as Boyer's dog and will live with the Hudsons in Peachtree City. He is currently being crate trained. "I told Tim if we're going to have an



Chipper Jones' son, Matthew (age 10), feeds the orphan fawns at Chipper's DoubleDime Ranch in Texas. Matthew was visiting his grandparents, Lynne and Larry Jones, this summer.



PINK RULES

RONNIE SNITKER (center), wife of third base coach **Brian Snitker** and a 15-year survivor of breast cancer, was a happy participant in the Breast Cancer Awareness Day events at Turner Field on Sept. 6. After a pre-game reception, the survivors lined up for the Walk in the Park. Women wearing pink and holding aloft helium-filled pink balloons lined the infield and simultaneously released the balloons. The Snitkers' college-aged children, daughter, **Erin**, and son, **Troy**, watched the ceremony from the stands with their dad, as did friends **Kim Hudson** (R) and **Jaena Norton** (L).

inside/outside dog, we're going to do it right," said Kim, who immediately began studying the best training methods. Their two other dogs, Kipper and Turner, are full-time residents at the family farm, Kenteska Plantation, in Alabama...

The 11th Annual **Tom Glavine's** Field of Dreams Golf Tournament to benefit CURE Childhood Cancer took place Sept. 8 at the Country Club of the South. **Kristin Connor**, executive director of CURE, estimated the total take from the event at around \$200,000. The tournament had 33 four-somes and included such "celebrity" golfers as **John Smoltz** and former Braves pitcher **Charlie Liebrandt**. Glavine was unable to play in the tournament due to his recent elbow and shoulder surgery. "He's the designated putter," said Glavine's wife, **Chris**, who was on hand to lend moral support. The silent auction boasted unique

items such as electric guitars signed by **Eric Clapton**, **Jimmy Buffett** and the entire band U2, and a large framed montage of photos and credentials from **Tiger Woods'** four Masters wins. Items for the live auction included tickets to a taping of "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" and a day at the Glavines' house...

Vladimir Nunez was still awaiting word from his family in Havana, Cuba, days after Hurricane Ike tore through the country, Sept. 7. "You can't get a telephone signal," he said. It was the second hurricane to have affected his family. Hurricane Gustav struck 10 days before. Nunez's wife, **Gissia**, planned to visit the family in Cuba while the Braves were on the road, but her trip was cancelled when Gustav hit. They hope to make a trip to Cuba together to visit the family, many of whom Nunez hasn't seen since

he defected to the United States in 1995...

Tim and **Kim Hudson** are major contributors to the Make-A-Wish Foundation and will serve as honorary Gala Chairs for the Nov. 8 Celebration of Wishes Gala, at the Grand Hyatt in the Buckhead section of Atlanta. This year's gala will celebrate the organization granting its 4,000th wish. "Synergy," an Atlanta-based musical group, will perform throughout the evening. The event also includes a reception and silent auction, dinner, and an always-fabulous live auction. Those in attendance better be prepared to outbid Kim if they want the trip to Los Angeles for the finale of American Idol. She's won it the past two years! Tickets to the Gala cost \$250 a person. For more ticket information, or to purchase a table, contact **Kari Love** at klove@dga-al.wish.org.



PARTY OF THE YEAR

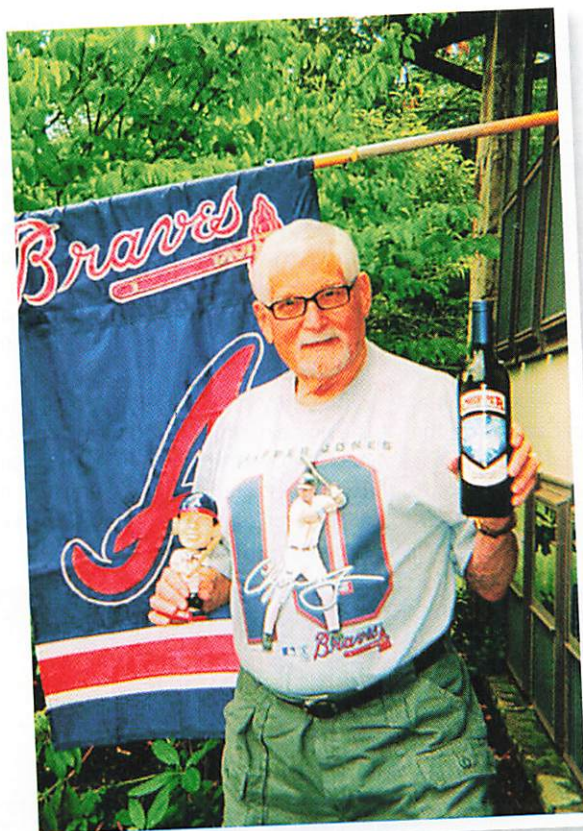
JEFF FRANCOEUR scored some serious brother-in-law points by suggesting that **Sam McCoy** (L), his wife **Catie's** youngest brother, and several of his friends, celebrate Sam's 14th birthday at Turner Field on Sept. 5. Sam and his friends got to hang out with Francoeur during an on-field batting practice visit and stayed for the game that night. "After the boys visited batting practice, they all went

up to the 755 Club grill, ate dinner, and had birthday cake, which was really chocolate chip cookies with icing in the shape of baseballs that spelled out 'Happy 14th Sam,'" said Catie (center). The evening's festivities were capped off sitting on the field to watch fireworks with members of the Braves' families. "The boys called it the party of the century," said Catie. "It made Sam's year."

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



CHIPPER'S THE ONE! ✉

I became a Braves fan in the early '90s when I lived in Richmond. I was a fan when Chipper began his career and have followed him ever since. I'm now retired and watch all the Braves games on TV and have Chipper and Braves memorabilia throughout my home. Chipper is a great hero for young boys and girls - and for old men!

NEWELL RANGLES

Knoxville, Tenn.

BRAVE HEART ✉

My husband (Bill), son (Jeff), grandson (Will), daughter-in-law (Lynn), and Will's friend (Dillon Crosby) were at Turner Field to see "my team" play the Phillies July 3. My husband and son were born in Philadelphia - but are big Braves fans. We attend several games a year, and it makes my heart go "chop-chop" when my guys can go with me. I hope to be at Turner Field on our 48th wedding anniversary in September.

BARBARA RICHARDSON

Blairsville, Ga.

FAMILY TIES ✉

My husband and I have been Braves fans and have subscribed to ChopTalk "forever." We love the team as if they are a part of our family. We're glad Tom Glavine is back, and we want Jon Sciambi and Joe Simpson to know we enjoy them very much.

RUEL & LOUISE MURKS

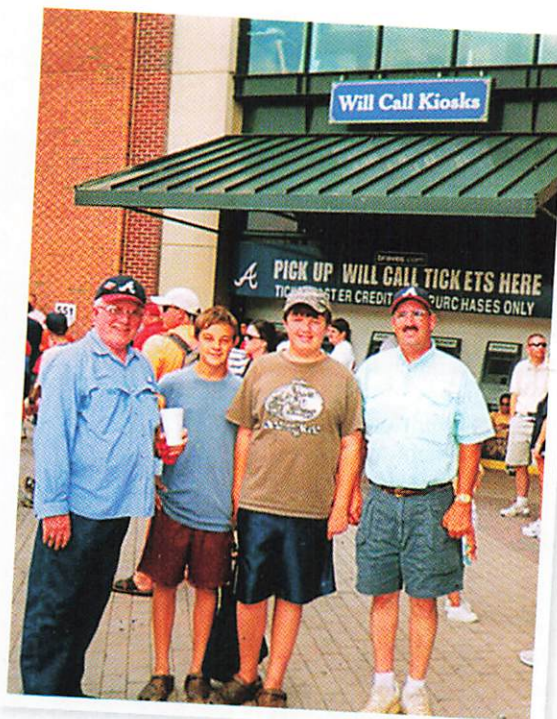
Florence, Ala.

INCREDIBLE HULK ✉

I am 55 and want to thank you for your outstanding magazine. I have really come to admire a young man that has surpassed all of my expectations and who I feel is the Braves' MVP. He's been in the last three All-Star Games and gets hit after hit, especially when it's needed the most. I'm talking about Brian "The Hulk" McCann.

JOEL M. MADDUX

Macon, Ga.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

READY TO GO ✉

Recently, our Grandpa Jim and Grandma Lynne (Smith) visited us in Cape Cod, where we live with our mommy and daddy. They came all the way from Sharpsburg, Ga., to see their "grandtwins" (that's us) and to bring us our first Atlanta Braves outfits. Grandpa says that even though we live in Red Sox country, we have to be Braves fans. We can't wait to get to Georgia to go to our first game at Turner Field and see the big cow. Here we are at age six and a half months, dressed and ready to go!

BROOKE & SHELBY SMITH
Cape Cod, Mass.

LOYAL IN OREGON ✉

My wife, Carol Dudley, and I planned to watch the Braves play the Seattle Mariners at Turner Field on June 20, 21, 22. Carol became an avid Braves fan in 1989 when she watched the games on TBS with her father. Carol was then a single mom, who raised her son, John, and two daughters, Michele and Becky. In May of 1999, John surprised his mom with tickets to watch the Braves at Turner Field. They made the trip and viewed the games from different locations each day. We love your magazine with the inside scoops and great articles about the players and their families.

GARY DUDLEY
Clackamas, Oregon



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For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

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HOUSE OF PAIN



JURRJENS "PITCHES" FOR CURACAO

BY JON COOPER

PARTICIPATING in the Little League World Series can be a dream come true, even for major leaguers.

Rookie pitcher and Willemstad, Curacao, native, Jair Jurrjens learned that on Aug. 16, when he flew to Williamsport, Pa., to throw out the first pitch prior to his native country's Little League World Series opener against Matamoros, Mexico.

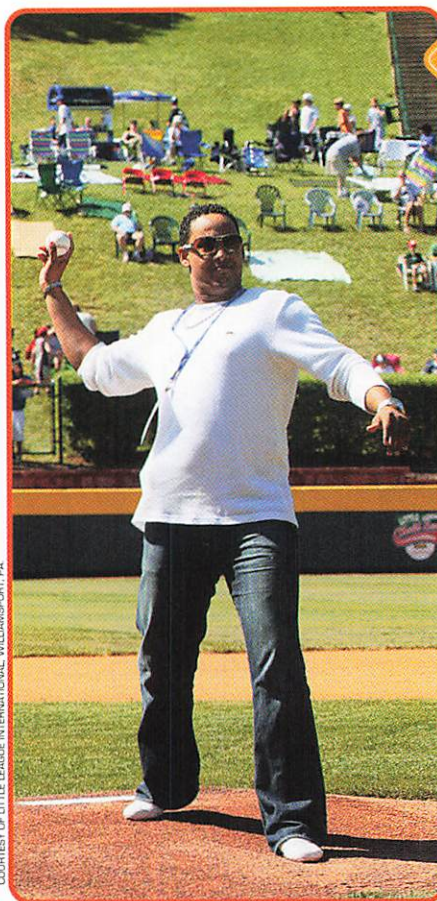
"I never played there, and it was one of my dreams, to go to Williamsport, to see the stadium, being surrounded by the Little Leaguers," said Jurrjens, who attended at the request of the Curacao Tourist Board. "To get an honor like that and go see the kids and be on a big stage like the Little League World Series, it wasn't so difficult to say 'yes.'"

Once he got the green light to leave the team for a day from Bobby Cox, Jurrjens, the first Curacao native to be the starting pitcher in a major league game (the Washington Nationals' Shairon Martis, a former Little League opponent and national team teammate of Jurrjens, became the second on Sept. 4 at Turner Field) hopped on a plane that Saturday morning bound for Williamsport.

Having pitched the night before against the San Francisco Giants made the trip tough for Jurrjens, but he was determined to make it.

"It took a little time to wake up, and being sore everywhere made it difficult," he said with a laugh. "But I was thinking about the smiles of the kids and how happy they're going to be when they see me. That gave me the energy to wake up early.

"I got there in time to throw the first



COURTESY OF LITTLE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL, WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

Curacao native Jair Jurrjens throws the ceremonial first pitch before his native country's opening game in the Little League World Series at Williamsport, Pa.

pitch," he added. "When they said my name, everybody stood up, especially the moms and dads from the kids from Curacao. They stood up and waved the flag. That was the best feeling I had in a long time."

A five-run fifth inning sunk Curacao, which lost, 6-2, but Jurrjens' presence in

the clubhouse afterward helped soften the blow.

"Since they lost, I didn't want to talk about the game," he said. "I just wanted to take pictures with them and hang around and talk and have fun with them and sign stuff for them.

"I hope I gave them some inspiration," he added, "[I wanted] to show back home, that just because I made it to the biggest stage in baseball in the world that I'm not going to forget about my island... and to say 'thanks' to it and to the kids that are showing the world that back home we have talent, too. Showing up and showing Curacao that I'm proud of those kids was the best thing I could do."

The experience made him a little nostalgic.

"I never got to the World Series. I lost in the Latin Tournament," Jurrjens recalled. "But the Latin Tournament was really big, too. We faced a lot of good countries, like Venezuela. We'd bring a big group of fans and they were yelling. Usually when Curacao and Venezuela used to play, the stadium was packed. Little League was the best time when I was a kid playing in it."

Jurrjens, 22, is the second prominent member of the Braves to come out of Willemstad, Curacao. Andruw Jones, of course, was the other one. The Braves acquired Jurrjens last October from Detroit in exchange for Edgar Renteria.

FAN CLUBS

BRAVES 400 CLUB

The Braves 400 Club is the official fan club of the Atlanta Braves. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting baseball at all levels. Annual membership is \$25 and includes a newsletter and the opportunity to participate in activities such as road trips, luncheons, the annual banquet, and charitable events. Send payment to: Braves 400 Club, P.O. Box 7689, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. For more information, call the organization's hotline at (770) 416-4539 or visit braves400.org.

MILWAUKEE BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization that promotes the memory of the Milwaukee Braves (1953-65). Annual membership is \$25 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, 6700 N. Range Line Rd., Glendale, Wisc. 53209. For information, call (414) 347-1212 or visit 57braves.com.

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boston Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Braves in the city where the franchise began in 1871 and that it represented through 1952. Annual membership is \$15 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Boston Braves Historical Association, P.O. Box 5668, Marlboro, Mass. 01752. For more information, call (508) 485-1423 or visit bostonbraves.com.

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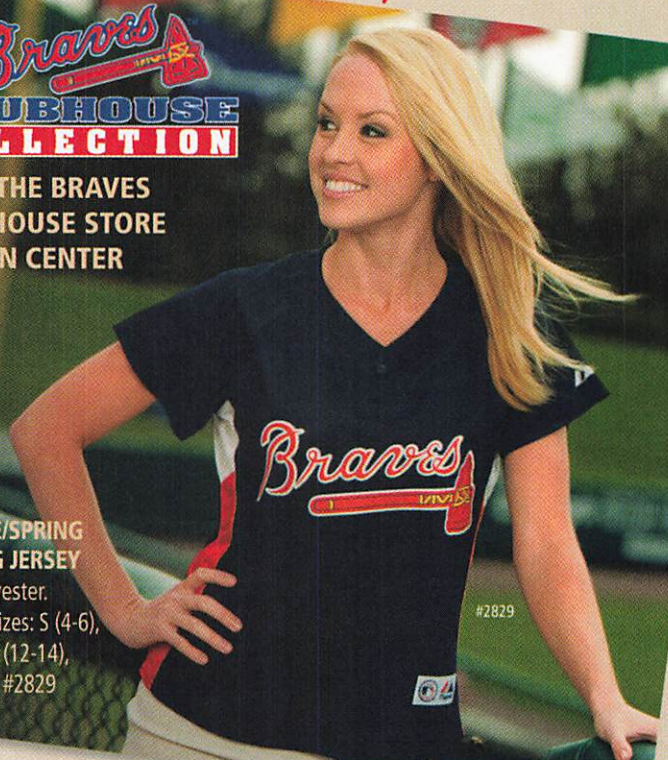


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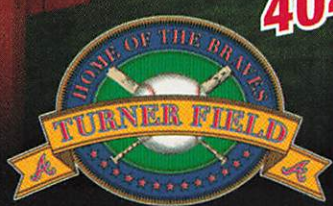
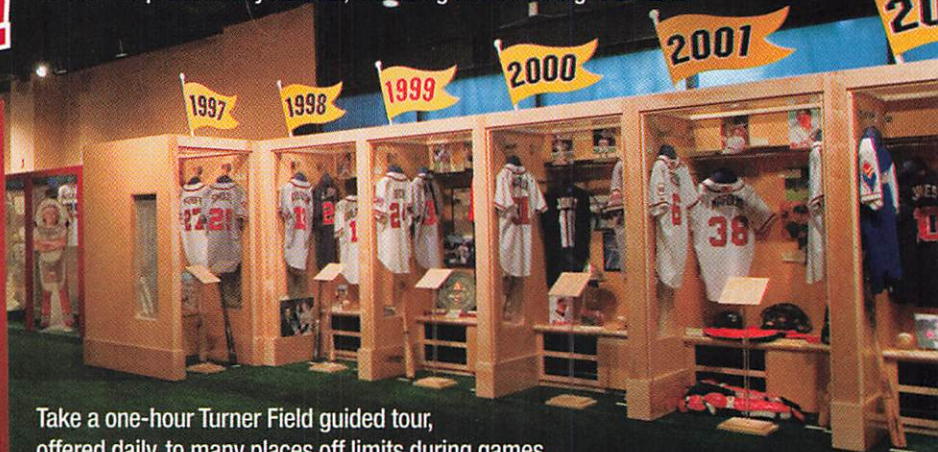


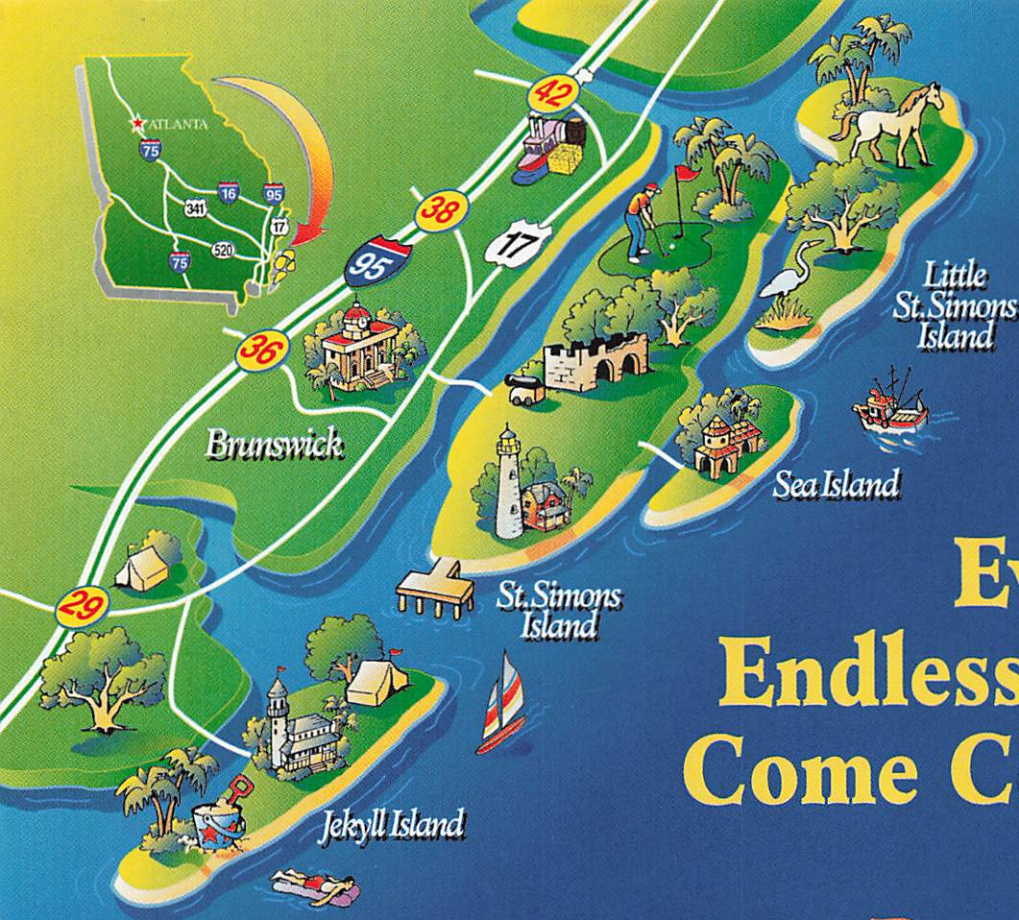
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